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THE GREEN COCKATOO
AND OTHER PLAYS



ARTHUR SCHNITZLER.

The Green Cockatoo

And Other Plays

By
ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

Translated into English by
HORACE B. SAMUEL



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INTRODUCTION

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER was born in 1862, the son of a Viennese physician. He first studied medicine, graduated in 1885, and was second physician to the General Hospital in Vienna from 1886 to 1888. Schnitzler established his reputation as an author with the publication, shortly after he had reached the age of thirty, of *Anatol*, a cycle of one-act episodes in which are delineated with extraordinary delicacy those two essentially Schnitzlerian types the *süßes Mädel*, and the romantic flaneur of the heart. In the twenty years subsequent to *Anatol*, Schnitzler has consolidated a European reputation by a number of plays, novels, and short stories, of which the most significant are *The Green Cockatoo*, *Vivid Hours*, *Frau Bertha Garlan*, *The Road in the Open*, and the perhaps slightly daring *Reigen*.

The essential characteristics of Schnitzler are the light touch, the psychological penetration, and the ironic wistfulness with which he handles his theme. Both in subject-matter and treatment he is one of the most modern of all modern dramatists, yet from beginning to end of his writings the caviller searches

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in vain for a trace of drastic harshness which is so often found in the modern problem play. Schnitzler, being a modern author, devotes himself *ipso facto* to the complications of sociological sex. He does this, however, neither with the mænadic frenzy of Strindberg nor with the thaumaturgic humanitarianism of Shaw, but in a mood more indicative of the sweet melancholy of a De Musset. And this perhaps is why, speaking generally, Schnitzler's strength lies rather in the creation of atmosphere than in the manipulation of violently dramatic situations, and that his most successful efforts have been not his full-dress dramas but his one-act plays, while the initial acts of so many of his dramas bear somewhat clearly the mark of the one-act play.

The three one-act plays in this volume were written about 1899. At first sight they may possibly appear too heterogeneous in their subject-matter to be linked together as a series in the same volume. *The Green Cockatoo* is a play of the French Revolution. *The Mate* is "modern problem." *Paracelsus* is a verse-play of the time of the Renaissance. The key to their inner unity lies in the line from Paracelsus, which is utilised by Schnitzler as the motto of the whole book:

We ever play, who knows it he is wise.

Strip the three plays of the varied trappings and dialects of their period, and you will find beneath a single psychological theme—the mingled clash

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and fusion of reality and unreality in human life. This, of course, is most marked in *The Green Cockatoo*. Compared to the convincingness of Henri's histrionic simulation of the murder off the stage of his wife's lover, the real murder on the stage is almost tame and theatrical. Note, too, how joke turns *hey-presto* into truth, when the insults which the host of the tavern had been accustomed to lavish on his patrons with a heartfelt sincerity underlying their official jest become transformed with the breaking out of the Revolution into official insults.

The play is also noteworthy for the masterly manipulation of the numerous *dramatis personæ* who together build up the full scheme of the composition, and by that concentrated psychology by which each one betrays in so few words his inner character. And how they all set each other into relief, from the grisette Flipotte to the lascivious *grande dame* Séverine, from that measly murderer Grain to the pretty young noble Albin whose corrupt flirtation is so deftly adumbrated.

It is amusing to remember that when first produced *The Green Cockatoo* gave offence to the authorities by reason of its revolutionary tendencies, and that a considerable time elapsed before it was produced at the Burg Theatre.

The Mate deals with the pathetic irony of the illusion of a middle-aged man who, giving an almost paternal benediction to his wife's *liaison*, raises to the

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level of a grand passion what is in fact nothing more than a promiscuous intrigue. Such an attitude may conceivably strike the English reader as unusual. It should be remembered, however, that the Professor is not only ultra-modern but also Austrian.

In *Paracelsus* that juggling with reality and unreality effected in *The Green Cockatoo* by acting is accomplished by hypnotism, a favourite theme of Schnitzler, as evidenced by the first episode in *Anatol*, and the first fantasia in *Dammerseelen*. But hypnotism is here utilised not so much to produce melodramatic effects as to symbolise the fundamental unreality of all life. For has not the dream as much psychological validity as physical experience, and is not the very hypnotist himself baffled by the doubt of whether the subject is following mechanically his suggestions or is actually speaking the real truth? And are not love, fighting, philosophy, ecstasy, and agony, when ultimately considered, simply mere means for the obtaining of impressions and the killing of time? Such, at any rate, is the theme of *Paracelsus*, that fascinating dramatic trinity where the Weltschmerz of nineteenth-century Romanticism masquerades in Renaissance costumes while equipped at the same time with all the machinery of twentieth-century psychology.

Schnitzler's Renaissance blank verse, which can perhaps be best characterised by the term "wienerische Weichheit" ("Viennese softness"), possesses perhaps

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greater analogy with Beaumont and Fletcher than with Shakespeare. It is sweetly melancholy and full of "effeminate" lines. It is, however, at the same time extraordinarily simple, depending less frequently on official poetic effects than on a certain inner charm the adequate reproduction of which in a translation must necessarily be difficult. We would quote in particular all the original fragrance of so sweet a line as :

Der Frühling schmeichelt und die Schönheit lockt !

We may perhaps conclude this preliminary survey by copying the example set by Mr. Archibald Henderson in a recent article in the *North American Review*, and by plagiarising with anonymous acknowledgment the conclusion of an article on Schnitzler written some years ago in the *Fortnightly Review*, in which it "has been aptly said" that no dramatist has written tragedy with so light a hand or comedy with so ironically pathetic a smile as Arthur Schnitzler.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

A GROTESQUE IN ONE ACT

CHARACTERS

EMILE, *Duc de Cadignan*
FRANÇOIS, *Vicomte de Nogeant*
ALBIN, *Chevalier de la Tremouille*
MARQUIS DE LANSAC
SÉVERINE, *his wife*
ROLLIN, *Port*
PROSPER, *formerly Theatre Manager (HOST)*
HENRI
BALTHASAR
GUILLAUME
SCAEVOLA
JULES
ETIENNE
MAURICE
LÉOCADIE
GEORGETTE
MICHETTE
FLIPOTTE
GRASSET, *Philosopher*
LEBBÊT, *Tailor*
GRAIN, *a Rogue*
THE COMMISSAIRE OF POLICE

His troupe

Nobles, Actors, Actresses, Citizens, and Citizens' Wives

The Action takes place in Paris on the 14th July, 1789, in the underground tavern of PROSPER.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

SCENE.—THE TAVERN OF THE GREEN COCKATOO

A medium-sized underground room. Seven steps lead down to it on the Right (rather far back). The stairs are shut off by a door on top. A second door which is barely visible is in the background on the Left. A number of simple wooden tables with benches around them fill nearly the whole room. On the Left in the Centre is a bar ; behind the bar a number of barrels with pipes. The room is lighted by oil lamps which hang from the ceiling.

The HOST, PROSPER. *Enter the* CITIZENS LEBRÊT *and* GRASSET.

GRASSET (*coming down the steps*). Come in, Lebrêt. I know the tap. My old friend and chief has always got a cask of wine smuggled away somewhere or other, even when all the rest of Paris is perishing of thirst.

HOST. Good evening, Grasset. So you show your face again, do you? Away with Philosophy? Have you a wish to take an engagement with me again?

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GRASSET. Ay, that's right. You must bring wine. I am the guest—you the host.

HOST. Wine? Where shall I get wine from, Grasset? They've sacked all the wine-shops in Paris this very night. And I would lieve wager that you had a hand therein.

GRASSET. Out with the wine. The mob who are coming an hour after us are bound—— (*listening*). Do you hear anything, Lebrêt?

LEBRÊT. It is like slight thunder.

GRASSET. Brav—Citizens of Paris—— (*To host*) You're sure to have another bottle in reserve for the mob—so out with it; my friend and admirer, the Citizen Lebrêt, tailor of the Rue St. Honoré, will pay for everything.

LEBRÊT. Certainly, certainly, I will pay.

(*HOST hesitates.*)

GRASSET. Show him that you have money, Lebrêt.

(*LEBRÊT draws out his purse.*)

HOST. Now I will see if I—— (*He opens the cock of a barrel and fills two glasses.*) Where do you come from, Grasset? The Palais-Royal?

GRASSET. For sure—I made a speech there. Aye, my good friend, it is my turn now. Do you know whom I spoke after?

HOST. Well?

GRASSET. After Camille Desmoulins. Yes, indeed, I dared to do it. And tell me, Lebrêt, who had the greater applause—Desmoulins or I?

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LEBRÊT. You—without a doubt.

GRASSET. And how did I bear myself?

LEBRÊT. Splendidly.

GRASSET. Do you hear, Prosper? I placed myself on the table—I looked like a monument—indeed I did—and all the thousands—five thousands, ten thousands, assembled round me—just as they had done before round Camille Desmoulins—and cheered me.

LEBRÊT. It was a louder cheer.

GRASSET. Indeed it was . . . not much louder, but it was louder. And now they're all moving towards the Bastille . . . and I make bold to say they have followed my call. I swear to you before the evening is out we shall have them.

HOST. Yes, to be sure, if the walls fall down before your speeches!

GRASSET. What—speeches—are you deaf? 'Tis a case of shooting now. Our valiant soldiers are there. They have the same hellish fury against the accursed prison as you have. They know that their brothers and fathers sit imprisoned behind those walls. . . . But there would have been no shooting if we had not spoken. My dear Prosper, great is the power of intellect. There—(to LEBRÊT) where are the papers?

LEBRÊT. Here! (*Pulls pamphlets out of his pocket.*)

GRASSET. Here are the latest pamphlets which have just been distributed in the Palais-Royal. Here is one by my friend Cerutti—"Memorial for the French People"; here is one by Desmoulins, who certainly speaks better than he writes—"Free France."

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HOST. When's your own pamphlet going to appear—the one you're always talking about, you know?

GRASSET. We need no more. The time has come for deeds. Anyone who sits within his four walls to-day is a knave. Every real man must go out into the streets.

LEBRÊT. Bravo!—bravo!

GRASSET. In Toulon they have killed the mayor; in Brignolles they have sacked a dozen houses; but we in Paris are always sluggards and will put up with anything.

HOST. You can scarcely say that now.

LEBRÊT (*who has been drinking steadily*). Up, you citizens, up!

GRASSET. Up! Lock up your shop and come with us now.

HOST. I'll come right enough, when the time comes.

GRASSET. Aye, to be sure, when there is no more danger.

HOST. My good friend, I love Liberty as well as you do, but my calling comes before everything.

GRASSET. There is only one calling now for citizens of Paris—freeing their brothers.

HOST. Yes, for those who have nothing else to do!

LEBRÊT. What says he? He makes game of us.

HOST. Never dreamt of it. But now, my friends, look to it that you go away—my performance will begin in a minute, and I can't find you a job in it.

LEBRÊT. What performance? Is this a theatre?

HOST. Certainly, 'tis a theatre. Why, only a fortnight ago your friend was playing here.

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LEBRÊT. Were you playing here, Grasset? . . . Why do you let the fellow jeer at you like that without punishing him?

GRASSET. Calm yourself—it is true; I did play here. This is no ordinary tavern: 'tis a den of thieves. Come.

HOST. You'll pay first.

LEBRÊT. If this is a den of thieves I won't pay a single sou.

HOST. Explain to your friend where he is.

GRASSET. This is a strange place. People who play criminals come here—and others who are criminals without suspecting it.

LEBRÊT. Indeed?

GRASSET. I would have you mark that what I just said was very witty; it is positively capable of making the substance of a whole speech.

LEBRÊT. I don't understand a word of all you say.

GRASSET. I was simply telling you that Prosper was my manager. And he is still playing comedy with his actors, but a different kind from before. My former gentlemen and lady colleagues sit around him and behave as though they were thieves. Do you understand? They tell blood-curdling stories of things that have never happened to them—speak of crimes they have never committed . . . and the audience that comes here enjoys the pleasant titillation of hobnobbing with the most dangerous rabble in Paris—swindlers, burglars, murderers—and——

LEBRÊT. What kind of an audience?

HOST. The most elegant people in Paris.

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GRASSET. Noble——

HOST. Gentlemen of the Court.

LEBRÊT. Down with them !

GRASSET. It does 'em good. It gives a fillip to their jaded senses. 'Twas here that I made a start, Lebrêt—here that I delivered my first speech as though for a joke ; here it was that I first began to hate the dogs who sat amongst us with all their fine clothes and perfumes and rottenness . . . and I am very glad indeed, my good Lebrêt, that you, too, should see just for once the place from which your great friend raised himself. (*In another tone*) I say, Prosper, supposing the business doesn't come off——

HOST. What business ?

GRASSET. Why, my political career—will you engage me again ?

HOST. Not for anything !

GRASSET (*lightly*). Why—I thought there might be still room for somebody besides your Henri.

HOST. Apart from that . . . I should be afraid that you might forget yourself one fine day and fall foul in earnest of one of my paying customers.

GRASSET (*flattered*). That would certainly be possible——

HOST. I—I have control over myself——

GRASSET. Frankly, Prosper, I must say that I would admire you for your self-control, if I happened not to know that you are a poltroon.

HOST. Ah ! my friend, I am satisfied with what I can do in my own line. I get enough pleasure out of being able to tell fellows my opinion of them to their

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faces and to insult them to my heart's content—while they take it for a joke. That, too, is a way of venting one's wrath (*draws a dagger and makes it flash*).

LEBRÊT. Citizen Prosper, what is the meaning of this?

GRASSET. Have no fear. I wager that the dagger has never been sharpened.

HOST. In that, my friend, you may be making a mistake. One fine day there will come along the time when the jest turns to earnest—and so I am ready for all emergencies.

GRASSET. The day is nigh. We live in great times. Come, Citizen Lebrêt, we will go to our comrades. Farewell, Prosper; you will see me either a great man or never again.

LEBRÊT. As a great man—or—not at all. (*Exeunt.*)

HOST *remains behind, sits on a table, opens a pamphlet, and reads aloud.*

HOST. "Now that the beast is in the noose, throttle it." He doesn't write badly, that little Desmoulins. "Never was richer booty offered to the victors. Forty thousand palaces and castles, two-fifths of all the property in France, will be the reward of valour. Those who plume themselves on being conquerors will be put beneath the yoke, the nation will be purged."

Enter the COMMISSAIRE.

HOST. Hallo—the rabble's beginning to come in pretty early to-night.

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COMM. My dear Prosper, don't start any of your jokes on me; I am the Commissaire of your district.

HOST. And how can I be of any service?

COMM. I have orders to be present in your tavern all the evening.

HOST. It will be an especial honour for me.

COMM. 'Tis nothing of that, my excellent Prosper. The authorities wish to have definite information as to what really goes on in your place. For some weeks——

HOST. This is a place of amusement, M. le Commissaire—nothing more.

COMM. Let me finish what I was saying. For some weeks past this place is said to have been the theatre of wild orgies.

HOST. You are falsely informed, M. le Commissaire. We make jokes here, nothing more.

COMM. It begins with that, I know. But it finishes up in another way, so I am informed. You have been an actor.

HOST. A manager, sir—manager of a first-class troupe who last played in Denis.

COMM. That is immaterial. Then you came into a small legacy.

HOST. Not worth speaking about, M. le Commissaire.

COMM. Your troupe split up.

HOST. And my legacy as well.

COMM. (*smiling*). Quite good. (*Both smile. Suddenly serious.*) You started a tavern.

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HOST. That fared wretchedly.

COMM. After which you had an idea that, one must really own, possesses a certain quantum of originality.

HOST. You make me quite proud, sir.

COMM. You gathered your troupe together again, and have a comedy played here which is of a peculiar and by no means harmless character.

HOST. If it were harmful, M. le Commissaire, I should not have my audience—the most aristocratic audience in Paris, I'm in a position to say. The Vicomte de Nogeant is my daily customer. The Marquis de Lansac often comes, and the Duc de Cadignan, M. le Commissaire, is the most enthusiastic admirer of my leading actor, the celebrated Henri Baston.

COMM. As well as of the art or arts of your actresses.

HOST. When you get to know my little actresses, M. le Commissaire, you won't blame anybody in the whole world for that.

COMM. Enough. The authorities have been informed that the entertainments which your—what shall I say——?

HOST. The word "artiste" ought to suffice.

COMM. I will decide on the word "subjects"—that the entertainments which your subjects provide transgress in every sense the limits the law allows. Speeches are said to be delivered by your—what shall I say?—by your artiste-criminals which—what does my information say?—(*he reads from a notebook, as he*

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had been doing previously)—which are calculated to produce not only an immoral effect, which would bother us but little, but a highly seditious effect—a matter to which the authorities absolutely cannot be indifferent, in an age so agitated as the one in which we live.

HOST. M. le Commissaire, I can only answer that accusation by politely inviting you to see the thing just once for yourself. You will observe that nothing of a seditious nature takes place here, if only because my audience will not permit itself to be made seditious. There is simply a theatrical performance here, that is all.

COMM. I naturally cannot accept your invitation, but I will stay here by virtue of my office.

HOST. I think I can promise you a first-class entertainment, M. le Commissaire; but I will take the liberty of advising you to doff your official garb and to appear here in civilian clothes. If people actually saw a Commissaire in uniform here, both the spontaneity of my artistes and the mood of my audience would suffer thereby.

COMM. You are right, M. Prosper; I will go away and come back as an elegant young man.

HOST. You will have no difficulty about that, M. le Commissaire. You would be welcome here even as a rascal—that would not excite attention—but not as a Commissaire.

COMM. Good-bye. (*Starts to go.*)

HOST (*bowing*). When will the blessed day come when I can treat you and your damned likes——?

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The COMMISSAIRE meets GRAIN in the doorway. GRAIN is in absolute rags and gives a start when he sees the COMMISSAIRE. The latter looks at him first, smiles, and then turns courteously to
HOST.

COMM. One of your artistes already? (*Exit.*)

GRAIN (*whining pathetically*). Good evening.

HOST (*after looking at him for a long time*). If you're one of my troupe, I won't grudge you my recognition . . . of your art, because I don't know you.

GRAIN. What do you mean?

HOST. No jests now; take off your wig; I'd rather like to know who you are. (*He pulls at his hair.*)

GRAIN. Oh, dear!

HOST. But 'tis genuine! Heavens—who are you? You appear to be a real ragamuffin.

GRAIN. Ay, truly.

HOST. What do you want of me?

GRAIN. Have I the honour of speaking to Citizen Prosper?—the host of The Green Cockatoo?

HOST. I am he.

GRAIN. My name is Grain, sometimes Carniche—very often Shrieking Pumice-stone; but I was sent to prison, Citizen Prosper, in the name of Grain, and that is the real point.

HOST. Ah, I understand. You want to get engaged here, and play me something forthwith. Good. Go on,

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GRAIN. Citizen Prosper, don't look upon me as a swindler. I am a man of honour. If I tell you that I was imprisoned, 'tis the complete truth.

HOST *looks at him suspiciously.*

GRAIN (*pulling a paper out of his pocket*). Here, Citizen Prosper, you can see from this that I was let out yesterday afternoon at four o'clock.

HOST. After two years' imprisonment! Zounds, 'tis genuine!

GRAIN. Were you all the time doubting it, then, Citizen Prosper?

HOST. What did you do to get two years?

GRAIN. I would have been hanged; but I was lucky enough to be still half a child when I killed my poor aunt.

HOST. Nay, fellow, how can a man kill his own aunt?

GRAIN. Citizen Prosper, I would never have done it if my aunt had not deceived me with my best friend.

HOST. Your aunt?

GRAIN. That's it—she was dearer to me than aunts usually are to their nephews in the ordinary way. The family relations were peculiar—it made me embittered, most embittered. May I tell you about it?

HOST. Go on telling—perhaps you and I will be able to do business together.

GRAIN. My sister was but half a child when she ran away from home—and whom do you think she went with?

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HOST. 'Tis difficult to guess.

GRAIN. With her uncle. And he left her in the lurch—with a child——

HOST. A whole one, I hope.

GRAIN. 'Tis indelicate of you, Citizen Prosper, to jest about such things.

HOST. I'll tell you what, Shrieking Pumice-stone, you—your family history bores me. Do you think I'm here to listen to every Tom, Dick, or Harry o' a ragamuffin telling me whom he has killed? What's all that got to do with me? I take it you wish something of me.

GRAIN. Ay, truly, Citizen Prosper; I've come to ask you for work.

HOST (*sarcastically*). I would have you mark that there are no aunts to murder in my place—this is a house of entertainment.

GRAIN. Oh, I found the once quite enough. I want to become a respectable member of society—I was recommended to come to you.

HOST. By whom, if I may ask?

GRAIN. A charming young man whom they put in my cell three days ago. Now he's alone. His name's Gaston . . . and you know him.

HOST. Gaston! Now I know why I've missed him for three evenings. One of my best interpreters of pickpockets. He told yarns—ah! it made 'em split their sides.

GRAIN. Quite so. And now they've nobbed him.

HOST. Nobbed—what do you mean? He didn't really steal.

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GRAIN. Yes, he did. But it must have been the first time, for he seems to have gone about it with incredible clumsiness. Just think of it—(*confidentially*)—just made a grab at the pocket of a lady in the Boulevard des Capucines, and pulled out her purse—an absolute amateur. You inspire me with confidence, Citizen Prosper, and so I'll make a confession to you. There was a time when I, too, transacted little bits of business of that sort, but never without my dear father. When I was still a child, when we all lived together, when my poor aunt was still alive——

HOST. What are you crying for? I think 'tis in bad taste. Didn't you kill her?

GRAIN. Too late. But the point I was coming to is—take me on here. I will do just the opposite of Gaston. He played the thief and became one——

HOST. I will give you a trial. You will produce a fine effect with your make-up. And at a given moment you'll just describe the aunt matter—how it all happened—someone or other will be sure to ask you.

GRAIN. I thank you, Citizen Prosper. And with regard to my wages——

HOST. To-night you will be a visitor on trial. Since I am not yet in a position to pay you wages, you will get good stuff to eat and drink; and I shall not mind a franc or so for a night's lodging.

GRAIN. I thank you. And just introduce me to your other colleagues as a visitor from the provinces.

HOST. Oh, no. We will tell them right away

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that you are a real murderer. They would much prefer that.

GRAIN. Pardon me. I don't wish to do anything against my interests, but I don't see why——

HOST. When you have been on the boards a bit longer, you will see why quite well.

Enter SCAEVOLA and JULES.

SCAEV. Good evening, Chief.

HOST. How many times have I got to tell you that the whole joke falls flat if you call me Chief?

SCAEV. Well, whatever you are, I don't think we shall play to-night.

HOST. And why?

SCAEV. The people won't be in the mood. There's a hellish uproar in the streets, and in front of the Bastille especially they are yelling like men possessed.

HOST. What matters that to us? The shouting has been going on for months, and our audience hasn't stayed away from us. It goes on diverting itself just as it did before.

SCAEV. Ay, it has the gaiety of people who are shortly going to be hanged.

HOST. If only I live to see it!

SCAEV. In the meanwhile, give us something to drink to get me into the vein. I don't feel at all in the vein to-night.

HOST. That's often the case with you, my friend. I must tell you that I was most dissatisfied with you last night.

SCAEV. Why so, if I may ask?

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HOST. The story about the burglary was simply babyish.

SCAEV. Babyish?

HOST. To be sure. Absolutely incredible. Mere roaring is of no avail.

SCAEV. I didn't roar.

HOST. You are always roaring. It will really be necessary for me to rehearse things with you. One can never rely on your inspirations. Henri is the only one.

SCAEV. Henri—never anything but Henri! Henri simply plays to the gallery. My burglary of last night was a masterpiece. Henri will never do anything as good as that as long as he lives. If I don't satisfy you, my friend, then I'll just go to a proper theatre. This is nothing but a cheap-jack performance. Hallo! (*Notices GRAIN.*) Who is this? He isn't one of our lot, is he? Perhaps you've just engaged someone? But what a make-up the fellow has!

HOST. Calm yourself. 'Tis not a professional actor. 'Tis a real murderer.

SCAEV. Oh, indeed. (*Goes up to him.*) Very glad to know you. My name is Scaevola.

GRAIN. My name is Grain.

JULES has been walking round the bar the whole time, frequently standing still, like a man tortured inwardly.

HOST. What ails you, Jules?

JULES. I am learning my part.

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HOST. What?

JULES. Remorse. To-night I am playing a man who is a prey to remorse. Look at me. What do you think of the furrow in the forehead here? Do I not look as though all the furies of hell——
(*Walks up and down.*)

SCAEV. (*roars*). Wine—wine, here!

HOST. Calm yourself. 'There is no audience yet.

Enter HENRI and LÉOCADIE.

HENRI. Good evening. (*He greets those sitting at the back with a light wave of his hand.*) Good evening, gentlemen.

HOST. Good evening, Henri. What do I see?—you and Léocadie together?

GRAIN (*who has noticed LÉOCADIE, to SCAEVOLA*). Why, I know her. (*Speaks softly with the others.*)

LÉOCADIE. Yes, my dear Prosper, it is I.

HOST. I have not seen you for a year on end. Let me greet you. (*He tries to kiss her.*)

HENRI. Stop that. (*His eyes often rest on LÉOCADIE with pride and passion, but also a certain anxiety.*)

HOST. But, Henri—as between old comrades—your old chief and Léocadie.

LÉOCADIE. Oh, the good old times, Prosper!

HOST. What are you sighing about? When a wench has made her way in the way you have! No doubt about it, a pretty young woman has always a much easier time of it than we have.

HENRI (*wild with rage*). Stop it.

HOST. Why the deuce do you keep on shouting

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at me like that? Because you've picked up with her once more?

HENRI. Hold your tongue—she became my wife yesterday.

HOST. Your . . .? (*To LÉOCADIE*) Is he joking?

LÉOCADIE. He has really married me. Yes.

HOST. Then I congratulate you. . . . I say, Scaevola, Jules, Henri is married.

SCAEVOLA (*comes to the front*). I wish you joy (*winks at LÉOCADIE*).

JULES *shakes hands with them both*.

GRAIN (*to HOST*). Ah! How strange! I saw that woman—a few minutes after I was let out.

HOST. What do you mean?

GRAIN. She was the first pretty woman I'd seen for two years. I was very moved. But it was another gentleman with whom— (*Goes on speaking to HOST.*)

HENRI (*in an exalted tone as though inspired, but not theatrically*). Léocadie, my love, my wife . . . all the past is over now. A great deal is blotted out on an occasion like this.

SCAEVOLA and JULES *have gone to the back*.

HOST *comes forward again*.

HOST. What sort of occasion?

HENRI. We are united now by a holy sacrament. That means more than any human oath. God is now watching over us, and one ought to forget everything which has happened before. Léocadie, a new age is dawning. Everything becomes holy now,

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Léocadie. Our kisses, however wild they may be, are holy from henceforth. Léocadie, my love, my wife! (*He contemplates her with an ardent glance.*) Isn't her expression quite different, Prosper, to what you ever knew her to have before? Is not her forehead pure? What has been is blotted out—hey, Léocadie?

LÉOCADIE. Surely, Henri.

HENRI. And all is well. We leave Paris to-morrow. Léocadie makes her last appearance to-night at the Porte St. Martin, and I am playing here to-night for the last time.

HOST. Are you mad, Henri? Do you want to desert me? Besides, the manager of the Porte St. Martin will never think of letting Léocadie go away. Why, she makes the fortune of his house. The young gentlemen stream thither, so they say.

HENRI. Hold your peace. Léocadie will go with me. She will never desert me. Tell me that you will never desert me, Léocadie. (*Brutally*) Tell me.

LÉOCADIE. I will never desert you.

HENRI. If you did, I would . . . (*pause*). I am sick of this life. I want quiet—I wish to have quiet.

HOST. But what do you want to do then, Henri? It is quite ridiculous. I will make you a proposition. So far as I am concerned, take Léocadie from the Porte St. Martin, but let her stay here with me. I will engage her. Anyway, I have rather a dearth of talented women characters.

HENRI. My mind is made up, Prosper. We are leaving town. We are going into the country.

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HOST. Into the country? But where?

HENRI. To my old father's, who lives alone in our poor village—I haven't seen him for seven years. He has almost given up hope of ever seeing his lost son again. He will welcome me with joy.

PROSP. What will you do in the country? In the country they all starve. People are a thousand times worse off there than in town. What on earth will you do there? You are not the man to till the fields. Don't imagine you are.

HENRI. Time will prove that I am the man to do even that.

HOST. Soon there won't be any corn growing in any part of France. You are going to certain misery.

HENRI. To happiness, Prosper. Hey, Léocadie? We have often dreamt of it. I yearn for the peace of the wide plains. Yes, Prosper, I have seen myself in my dreams going over the fields with her, in an infinite stillness with the wonderful placid heavens over us. Ay, we will fly away from this awful and dangerous town; the great peace will come over us. Is it not true, Léocadie? We have often had such dreams?

LÉOCADIE. Yes, we have often had such dreams.

HOST. Look here, Henri, you should consider it. I will gladly raise your wages and I will give Léocadie quite as much as you.

LÉOCADIE. Hear you that, Henri?

HOST. I really don't know who's to take your place here. Not a single one of my people has such

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precious inspirations as you have, not one of them is so popular with my audience as you . . . don't go away.

HENRI. I can quite believe that no one will take my place.

HOST. Stay by me, Henri. (*Throws LÉOCADIE a look ; she intimates that she will arrange matters.*)

HENRI. And I can promise you that they will take my departure to heart—they, not me. For to-night—for my final appearance I have reserved something that will make them all shudder . . . a foreboding of the end of the world will come over them . . . for the end of their world is nigh. But I shall only experience it from a safe distance . . . they will tell us about it out there, Léocadie, many days after it has happened. . . . But I tell you, they will shudder. And you yourself will say, "Henri has never played so well."

HOST. What are you going to play? What? Do you know what, Léocadie?

LÉOCADIE. I never know anything.

HENRI. But has anyone any idea of what an artist lies hidden within me?

HOST. They certainly have an idea, and that's why I tell you that a man with a talent such as yours doesn't go and bury himself in the country. What an injustice to yourself! and to Art!

HENRI. I don't care a straw about Art. I wish for quiet. You don't understand that, Prosper; you have never loved——

HOST. Oh!

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HENRI. As I love. I want to be alone with her—that's the only way . . . that's the only way, Léocadie, of forgetting everything. But then we shall be happier than human beings have ever been before. We shall have children; you will be a good mother, Léocadie, and a true wife. All the past, all the past will be blotted out. (*Great pause.*)

LÉOCADIE. 'Tis getting late, Henri. I must go to the theatre. Farewell, Prosper; I am glad at last to have seen your famous den, the place where Henri scores such triumphs.

HOST. But why did you never come?

LÉOCADIE. Henri would never let me—just because I should have to sit next to the young men, you know.

HENRI (*has gone to the back*). Give me a drink, Scaevola.

HOST (*to LÉOCADIE, when HENRI is out of hearing*). Henri is an arrant fool—as though you had only sat next to him all your life.

LÉOCADIE. Now then! no remarks of that sort.

HOST. Take my tip and be careful, you silly gutter-brat. He will kill you one of these days.

LÉOCADIE. What's up, then?

HOST. You were seen only yesterday with one of your fellows.

LÉOCADIE. That was not a fellow, you blockhead; that was——

HENRI (*turns round quickly*). What's the matter with you? No jokes, if you don't mind. No more whispering. No more secrets now. She is my wife.

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HOST. What did you give her for a wedding present?

LÉOCADIE. Heavens! he never thinks about such things.

HENRI. Well, you shall have one this very night.

LÉOCADIE. What?

SCAEV. and JULES. What are you going to give her?

HENRI (*quite seriously*). When you have finished your scene, you must come here and see me act. (*They laugh.*)

HENRI. No woman ever had a more glorious wedding present. Come, Léocadie. Goodbye for the present, Prosper. I shall soon be back again. (*Exeunt HENRI and LÉOCADIE.*)

Enter together FRANÇOIS, Vicomte de Nogeant, and ALBIN, Chevalier de la Tremouille.

SCAEV. What a contemptible braggart!

HOST. Good evening, you swine.

ALBIN *starts back.*

FRANÇOIS (*without taking any notice*). Was not that the little Léocadie of the Porte St. Martin, who went away with Henri?

HOST. Of course it was.—If she really took great trouble she could eventually make you remember that even you are something of a man, eh?

FR. (*laughing*). That is not impossible. It seems we are rather early to-night.

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HOST. In the meanwhile you can amuse yourself with your minion.

ALBIN *is on the point of flying into a passion.*

FR. Let it pass. I told you what went on here. Bring us wine.

HOST. Ay, that I will. The time will soon come when you will be very satisfied with Seine water.

FR. Quite so, quite so . . . but to-night I would fain ask for wine, and the best wine into the bargain.

HOST *goes to the bar.*

ALBIN. That is really a dreadful fellow.

FR. But just think, it's all a joke. And, withal, there are places where you can hear similar things in real earnest.

ALBIN. Is it not forbidden?

FR. (*laughs*). One sees that you come from the provinces.

ALBIN. Ah! we, too, are having a bad time of it nowadays. The peasants are getting so insolent . . . one doesn't know what to do any more. . . .

FR. What would you have? The poor devils are hungry—that is the secret.

ALBIN. How can I help it? How can my great-uncle help it?

FR. Why do you mention your great-uncle?

ALBIN. Well, I do so because they actually held a meeting in our village—quite openly—and at the

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meeting they actually called my great-uncle the Comte de Tremouille a corn-usurer.

FR. Is that all?

ALBIN. Nay, I beg you!

FR. We will go to the Palais-Royal to-morrow, and there you will have a chance of hearing the monstrous speeches the fellows make. But we let them speak—it is the best thing to do. They are good people at bottom; one must let them bawl themselves out in that way.

ALBIN (*pointing to SCAEVOLA, etc.*). What suspicious characters those are! Just see how they look at one. (*He feels for his sword.*)

FR. (*draws his hand away*). Don't be ridiculous. (*To the three others*) You need not begin yet; wait till there is more audience. (*To ALBIN*) They're the most respectable people in the world, actors are. I will warrant you have already sat at table with worse knaves.

ALBIN. But they were better attired.

HOST *brings wine. Enter MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE.*

FR. God be with you, children! Come and sit down by us.

MICH. Here we are. Come along, Flipotte. She is still somewhat shy.

FLIP. Good evening, young gentleman.

ALBIN. Good evening, ladies.

MICH. The little one is a dear. (*She sits on Albin's lap.*)

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ALBIN. But, François, please explain, are these respectable ladies ?

MICH. What does he say ?

FR. No, that's not quite the word for the ladies who come here. Odds life, you are silly, Albin !

HOST. What shall I bring for their Graces ?

MICH. Bring me a very sweet wine.

FR. (*pointing to FLIPOTTE*). A friend of yours ?

MICH. We live together. Yes, we have only one bed between us.

FLIP. (*blushing*). Would you find it a very great nuisance to come and see it ? (*Sits on FRANÇOIS's lap.*)

ALBIN. She is not at all shy.

SCAEVOLA (*stands up ; gloomily turning to the table where the young people are*). At last I've found you. (*To ALBIN*) And you, you miserable seducer, aren't you ashamed that you . . . She is mine.

HOST *looks on.*

FR. (*to ALBIN*). A joke—a joke. . . .

ALBIN. She isn't his——

MICH. Go away. You let me sit where I want to.

SCAEVOLA *stands there with clenched fists.*

HOST (*behind*). Now, now ?

SCAEVOLA. Ha, ha !

HOST (*takes him by the collar*). Ha, ha ! (*By his side*) You have not a farthing's worth of talent. Roaring, that's the only thing you can do.

MICH. (*to FRANÇOIS*). He did it much better a short time ago.

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SCAEVOLA (*to HOST*). I'm not in the vein. I'll make a better show later on, when more people are here ; you see, Prosper, I need an audience.

Enter the DUC DE CADIGNAN.

DUKE. Already in full swing !

MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE go up to him.

MICH. My sweet Duke.

FR. Good evening, Emile . . . (*introducing*) My young friend, Albin, Chevalier de Tremouille—the Duc de Cadignan.

DUKE. I am delighted to make your acquaintance. (*To the girls, who are hanging on to him*) Leave me alone, children ! (*To ALBIN*) So you, too, are having a look at this droll tavern ?

ALBIN. It bewilders me in the extreme.

FR. The Chevalier has only been in Paris a few days.

DUKE (*laughing*). Then you have certainly chosen a nice time.

ALBIN. How so ?

MICH. He still has that delicious perfume ! There isn't another man in Paris who has such a pleasant smell. (*To ALBIN*) . . . You can't perceive it like that.

DUKE. She speaks of the seven or eight hundred whom she knows as well as me.

FLIP. Will you let me play with your sword, dear ? (*She draws his sword out of its sheath and flashes it about.*)

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GRAIN (*to* HOST). He's the man—'twas him I saw with her with——

HOST *lets him go on, seems astonished.*

DUKE. Henri is not here yet, then? (*To* ALBIN) If you see him, you will not regret having come here.

HOST (*to* DUKE). Oh, so you're here again, are you? I am glad. We shall not have the pleasure much longer.

DUKE. Why? I find it very nice at your place.

HOST. I believe that. But since in any case you will be one of the first . . .

ALBIN. What does that mean?

HOST. You understand me well enough. The favourites of fortune will be the first! (*Goes to the back.*)

DUKE (*after reflection*). If I were king, I would make him my Court Fool; I mean to say, I should have many Court Fools, but he would be one of them.

ALBIN. What did he mean by saying that you were too fortunate?

DUKE. He means, Chevalier . . .

ALBIN. Please, don't call me Chevalier. Everybody calls me Albin, simply Albin, just because I look so young.

DUKE (*smiling*). Good. . . . But you must call me Emile—eh?

ALBIN. With pleasure, if you allow it, Emile.

DUKE. They have a sinister wit, have these people.

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FR. Why sinister? I find it quite reassuring. So long as the mob is in the mood for jests, it will never come to anything serious.

DUKE. Only the jests are much too strange. I learnt a thing to-day that gives food for thought.

FR. Tell us.

FLIP. *and* MICH. Ay, tell us, sweet Duke!

DUKE. Do you know Lelange?

FR. Of course—the village . . . the Marquis de Montserrat has one of his finest hunts there.

DUKE. Quite right; my brother is now at the castle with him, and he has written home about the things I am going to tell you. They have a mayor at Lelange who is very unpopular.

FR. If you can tell me the name of one who is popular——

DUKE. Just listen. The women of the village paraded in front of the mayor's house with a coffin.

FLIP. What? Did they carry it? Carry a coffin? I wouldn't like to carry a coffin for anything in the world.

FR. Hold your tongue. Nobody is asking you to carry a coffin. (*To the DUKE*) Well?

DUKE. And one or two of the women went into the mayor's house and explained to him that he must die, but they would do him the honour of burying him.

FR. Well, have they killed him?

DUKE. No; at least, my brother doesn't write anything about it.

FR. Well then . . . blusterers, talkers, clowns——

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that's what they are. To-day they're roaring in Paris at the Bastille for a change, just as they've already done half a dozen times before . . .

DUKE. Well, if I were king I should have made an end of it long ago.

ALBIN. Is it true that the king is so good-natured?

DUKE. You have not yet been presented to His Majesty?

FR. This is the first time the Chevalier has been in Paris.

DUKE. Yes, you are incredibly young. How old, if I may ask?

ALBIN. I only look so young; I am already seventeen.

DUKE. Seventeen!—how much is still in front of you! I am already four-and-twenty! . . . I am beginning to regret how much of my youth I have missed!

FR. (*laughs*). That is good. You, Duke—you count every day lost in which you have not conquered a woman or killed a man.

DUKE. Only the unfortunate thing is that one never makes a conquest of the right woman, and always kills the wrong man. And that as a matter of fact is how one misses one's youth. You know what Rollin says?

FR. What does Rollin say?

DUKE. I was thinking of his new piece that they are playing at the Comédie—there is such a pretty simile in it. Don't you remember?

FR. I have no memory for verses.

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DUKE. Nor have I, unfortunately . . . I only remember the sense. He says, youth which a man does not enjoy is like a feather-ball, which you leave lying in the sand instead of throwing it up into the air.

ALBIN (*like a wiseacre*). I think that is quite right.

DUKE. Is it not true? The feathers gradually lose their colour and fall out. 'Tis better for it to fall into a bush where it cannot be found.

ALBIN. How should one understand that, Emile?

DUKE. 'Tis more a matter of feeling than of understanding. If I could repeat the verses, you would understand it at once.

ALBIN. I have an idea, Emile, that you, too, could make verses if you wished.

DUKE. Why?

ALBIN. Since you have been here, it seems to me as though life were flaming up.

DUKE (*smiling*). Yes? Is life flaming up?

FR. Won't you come and sit with us after all?

Meanwhile, two nobles come in and sit down at a distant table. HOST appears to be addressing insults to them.

DUKE. I cannot stay here. But in any case I will come back again.

MICH. Stay with me.

FLIP. Take me with you. (*They try to hold him.*)

HOST (*coming to the front*). Just you leave him alone. You're not bad enough for him by a long way. He's got to run after a whore off the streets—that's where he feels most in his element.

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DUKE. I shall certainly come back, if only not to miss Henri.

FR. What do you think, when we came, Henri was just going out with Léocadie.

DUKE. Really—he has married her. Did you know that?

FR. Is that so? What will the others have to say to it?

ALBIN. What others?

FR. She is loved all round, you know.

DUKE. And he wants to go away with her . . . what do I know about it? . . . Somebody told me.

HOST. Indeed? Did they tell you? (*Glances at the DUKE.*)

DUKE (*having first looked at HOST*). It is too silly. Léocadie was made to be the greatest, the most splendid whore in the world.

FR. Who doesn't know that?

DUKE. Could anything be more unreasonable than to take people away from their true calling? (*As FRANÇOIS laughs*) I am not joking. Whores are born, not made—just as conquerors and poets are.

FR. You are paradoxical.

DUKE. I am sorry for her, and for Henri. He should stay here—no, not here—I should like to bring him to the Comédie—though even there—I always feel as though nobody understood him as well as I do. Of course, that may be an illusion, since I have the same feeling in regard to most artists. But I must say if I were not the Duc de Cadignan, I should really like to be a comedian like him—like him, I say . . .

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ALBIN. Like Alexander the Great.

DUKE (*smiling*). Yes, like Alexander the Great. (To FLIP.) Give me my sword. (*He puts it in the sheath.*) (*Slowly*) It is the finest way of making fun of the world; a man who can portray whatever he wants to is worth more than all of us. (ALBIN *looks at him in astonishment.*) Don't you reflect on what I say. 'Tis all only true at the actual moment. Good-bye.

MICH. Give me a kiss before you go.

FLIP. Me too!

They hang on to him, the DUKE kisses them both at once and goes. In the meanwhile :

ALBIN. A wonderful man!

FR. That is quite true; . . . but the existence of men like that is almost a reason for not marrying.

ALBIN. But do explain; what are those girls?

FR. Actresses. They, too, belong to the troupe of Prosper, who is at present the host of the tavern. No doubt they've done in the past much the same as they're doing now.

GUILLAUME *rushes in* ^X *apparently breathless.*

GUILL. (*making towards the table where the actors are sitting, with his hand on his heart—speaking with difficulty—supporting himself*). Saved—ay, saved!

SCAEV. What is it? What ails you?

ALBIN. What has happened to the man?

FR. That is part of the acting now. Mark you.

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ALBIN. Ah!

MICH. and FLIP. (*going quickly to GUILLAUME*).
What is it? What ails you?

SCAEV. Sit down. Take a draught!

GUILL. More!—more! Prosper, more wine! I have been running. My tongue cleaves to my mouth. They were right at my heels.

JULES (*gives a start*). Ah! be careful; they really are at our heels.

HOST. Come, tell us, what happened then? (*To the actors*) Movement!—more movement!

GUILL. Women here . . . women—ah! (*Embraces FLIPOTTE.*) That brings one back to life again! (*To ALBIN, who is highly impressed*) The Devil take me, my boy, if I thought I would ever see you alive again. (*As though he were listening*) They come!—they come! (*Goes to the door.*) No, it is nothing. . . . They . . .

32 ALBIN. How strange! There really is a noise, as though people outside were pressing forward very quickly. Is that part of the stage effects as well?

SCAEV. He goes in for such damned subtleties every blessed time. (*To JULES*) 'Tis too silly—

HOST. Come now, tell us why they are at your heels again?

GUILL. Oh, nothing special. But if they got me, it would cost me my head. I've set fire to a house.

During this scene young nobles come in and sit down at the tables.

HOST (*softly*). Go on!—go on!

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GUILL. (*in the same tone*). What more do you want? Isn't it enough for you if I've set fire to a house?

FR. But tell me, my friend, why you set fire to the house.

GUILL. Because the President of the Supreme Court lived in it. We wanted to make a beginning with him. We wanted to make the good Parisian householders not take folk into their houses so lightly who send us poor devils to the house of correction.

GRAIN. That's good! That's good!

GUILL. (*looks at GRAIN and is surprised; then goes on speaking*). All the houses must be fired. Three more fellows like me and there won't be any more judges in Paris.

GRAIN. Death to the judges!

JULES. Yes . . . but there may be one whom we can't annihilate.

GUILL. I should like to know who he is.

JULES. The judge within us.

HOST (*softly*). That's tasteless. Leave off. Scaevola, roar! Now's the time.

SCAEV. Wine here, Prosper; we want to drink to the death of all the judges in France.

During the last words enter the MARQUIS DE LANSAC, with his wife, SÉVERINE, and ROLLIN, the poet.

SCAEV. Death to all who have the power in their hands to-day!

MARQUIS. See you, Séverine, that is how they greet us.

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ROLLIN. Marquise, I warned you.

SÉVERINE. Why?

FR. Whom do I see? The Marquise! Allow me to kiss your hand. Good evening, Marquis. Well met to you, Rollin. And you, Marquise, you dare to venture into this place!

SÉV. I heard such a lot about it. And besides, we are having a day of adventures already—hey, Rollin?

MARQUIS. Yes. Just think of it, Vicomte; you would never believe where we come from—from the Bastille.

FR. Are they still keeping up the show there?

SÉV. Ay, indeed! It looks as though they meant to storm it.

ROLLIN (*declaiming*). Like to a flood that seethes
against its banks,
And rages deep that its own child, the Earth,
Resists it.

SÉV. Don't, Rollin! We left our carriages there in the neighbourhood. It is a magnificent spectacle—there is always something so grand about crowds.

FR. Yes, yes, if they only did not smell so vilely.

MARQUIS. And my wife would not leave me in peace—I had to bring her here.

SÉV. Well, what is there so very special here?

HOST (*to LANSAC*). Well, so you're here, are you, you dried-up old scoundrel? Did you bring your wife along because she wasn't safe enough for you at home?

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MARQUIS (*with a forced laugh*). He's quite a character.

HOST. But take heed that she is not snatched away from under your nose in this very place. Aristocratic ladies like her very often get a deuce of a fancy to try what a real rogue is like.

ROLLIN. I suffer unspeakably, Séverine.

MARQUIS. My child, I prepared you for this—it is high time that we went.

SÉV. What more would you have? I think it's charming. Nay, let us seat ourselves.

FR. Would you allow me, Marquise, to present to you the Chevalier de la Tremouille. He is here for the first time, too. The Marquis de Lansac; Rollin, our celebrated poet.

ALBIN. Delighted. (*Compliments; they sit down.*) (*To FRANÇOIS*) Is that one of those that are playing, or—I can't make it out——

FR. Don't be so flabbergasted. That is the lawful wife of the Marquis de Lansac . . . a lady of extreme propriety.

ROLLIN (*to SÉVERINE*). Say that thou lovest me.

SÉV. Yes, yes; but ask me not every minute.

MARQUIS. Have we missed a scene already?

FR. Nothing much. An incendiary's playing over there, 'twould appear.

SÉV. Chevalier, you must be the cousin of the little Lydia de la Tremouille who was married to-day.

ALBIN. Quite so, Marquise; that was one of the reasons why I came to Paris.

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SÉV. I remember having seen you in the church.

ALBIN (*embarrassed*). I am highly flattered, Marquise.

SÉV. (*to ROLLIN*). What a dear little boy!

ROLLIN. My dear Séverine, you have never yet managed to know a man without his pleasing you.

SÉV. Indeed I did; and what is more, I married him straight away.

ROLLIN. I am always so afraid, Séverine—I am sure there are moments when it's not safe for you to be with your own husband.

HOST (*brings wine*). There you are. I wish it were poison; but for the time being, the law won't let us serve it to you, you scum.

FR. The time'll soon come, Prosper.

SÉV. (*to ROLLIN*). What is the matter with both those pretty girls? Why don't they come nearer? Now that we once are here, I want to join in everything. I really think that everything is extremely moral here.

MARQUIS. Have patience, Séverine.

SÉV. I think nowadays one diverts oneself best in the streets. Do you know what happened to us yesterday when we went for a drive in the Promenade de Longchamps?

MARQUIS. Please, please, my dear Séverine, why—

SÉV. A fellow jumped on to the footboard of our carriage and shouted, "Next year you will stand behind your coachman and we shall be sitting in the carriages."

FR. Hm! That is rather strong.

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MARQUIS. Odds life! I don't think one ought to talk of such things. Paris is now somewhat feverish, but that will soon pass off again. X

GUIL. (*suddenly*). I see flames—flames everywhere I look—red, high flames.

HOST (*to him*). You're playing a madman, not a criminal.

SÉV. Does he see flames?

FR. But all this is still not the real thing, Marquise.

ALBIN (*to ROLLIN*). I cannot tell you how bewildered I feel already with everything.

MICH. (*comes to the MARQUIS*). I have not yet greeted you, darling, you dear old pig.

MARQUIS (*embarrassed*). She jests, dear Séverine.

SÉV. I can't think that. Tell me, little one, how many love-affairs have you had so far?

MARQUIS (*to FR.*). It is really wonderful how well my wife the Marquise knows how to adapt herself to every situation.

ROLLIN. Yes, it is wonderful.

MICH. Have you counted yours?

SÉV. When I was still as young as you . . . of course . . .

ALBIN (*to ROLLIN*). Tell me, M. Rollin, is the Marquise one of the players, or is she really like—? I positively can't make it out.

ROLLIN. Reality . . . playing . . . do you know the difference so exactly, Chevalier?

ALBIN. Always.

ROLLIN. I don't. And what I find so peculiar

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here is that all apparent distinctions, so to speak, are taken away. Reality passes into play—play into reality. Just look now at the Marquise. How she gossips with those creatures as though she were one of them. At the same time she is——

ALBIN. Something quite different.

ROLLIN. I thank you, Chevalier.

HOST (to GRAIN). Well, how did it all happen?

GRAIN. What?

HOST. Why, the affair with your aunt, for which you went to prison for two years.

GRAIN. I told you, I strangled her.

FR. That is feeble. He is an amateur. I have never seen him before.

GEORGETTE (*comes quickly in, dressed like a prostitute of the lowest class*). Good evening, children. Is my Balthasar not here yet?

SCAEV. Georgette, sit by me. Your Balthasar will manage all right.

GEO. If he is not here in ten minutes, he won't bring off anything again—he won't come back at all then.

FR. Watch her, Marquise. She is the wife of that Balthasar of whom she has just been speaking, and who will soon come in. She represents just a common street-jade, while Balthasar is her bully. All the same, she is the truest wife to be found in the whole of Paris.

BALTHASAR *comes in*.

GEO. My Balthasar! (*She runs towards him and embraces him.*) So there you are.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

BAL. It is all in order. (*Silence around him.*) It was not worth the trouble. I was almost sorry for him. You should size up your customers better, Georgette. I am sick of killing promising youths for the sake of a few francs.

FR. Splendid!

ALBIN. What——?

FR. He brings out the points so well.

Enter the COMMISSAIRE, disguised; sits down at a table.

HOST (*to him*). You come at a good time, M. le Commissaire. This is one of my best exponents.

BAL. One should really try and find another profession. On my soul, I am not a craven, but jobs like this do take it out of one.

SCAEV. I can well believe so.

GEO. What's the matter with you to-day?

BAL. I will tell you what, Georgette—I think you're a trifle too tender with the young gentlemen.

GEO. See what a child he is! But be reasonable, Balthasar. I must needs be very tender so as to inspire them with confidence.

ROLLIN. What she says is really deep.

BAL. If I thought for a moment that you felt anything when another——

GEO. What do you say to that? Dumb jealousy will yet bring him to his grave.

BAL. I have already heard one sigh, Georgette, and that was at a moment when one of them was already giving sufficient proofs of his confidence.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

GEO. One can't leave off playing a woman in love so suddenly.

BAL. Be careful, Georgette—the Seine is deep. (*Wildly*) With whom are you deceiving me?

GEO. No, no.

ALBIN. I positively can't make it out.

SÉV. Rollin, that is the right interpretation!

ROLLIN. You think so?

MARQUIS (*to SÉVERINE*). It is time we were going, Séverine.

SÉV. Why? I am beginning to enjoy it.

GEO. My Balthasar, I adore you. (*Embrace.*)

FR. Bravo! bravo!

BAL. What loony is that?

COMM. This is unquestionably too strong; this is——

Enter MAURICE and ETIENNE. They are dressed like young nobles, but one can see that they are only disguised in dilapidated theatrical costumes.

FROM THE ACTORS' TABLE. Who are they?

SCAEV. May the devil take me if it ain't Maurice and Etienne.

GEO. Of course it is they!

BAL. Georgette!

SÉV. Heavens! what monstrously pretty young persons.

ROLLIN. It is painful, Séverine, to see you so violently excited by every pretty face.

SÉV. What did I come here for, then?

THE GREEN COCKATOO

ROLLIN. Tell me, at any rate, that you love me.

SÉV. (*with a look*). You have a short memory.

ETIENNE. Well, where do you think we have come from?

FR. Listen, Marquis; they're a couple of quite witty youths.

MAUR. A wedding.

ET. One has got to dress up a bit there. Otherwise one of those damned secret police gets on one's track at once.

SCAEV. At any rate, have you made a good haul?

HOST. Let's have a look.

MAUR. (*drawing a watch out of his waistcoat*). What'll you give me for it?

HOST. For that there? A louis.

MAUR. Indeed?

SCAEV. It is not worth more.

MICH. That is a lady's watch. Give it to me, Maurice. ✓

MAUR. What will you give me for't?

MICH. Look at me—isn't that enough?

FLIP. No, give it to me; look at me——

MAUR. My dear children, I can have that without risking my head.

MICH. You are a conceited ape.

SÉV. I swear that's no acting.

ROLLIN. Of course not; there is a flash of reality running through the whole thing. That is the chief charm.

SCAEV. What wedding was it, then?

THE GREEN COCKATOO

MAUR. The wedding of Mademoiselle de la Tremouille ; she was married to the Comte de Banville.

ALBIN. Do you hear that, François ? I assure you they are real knaves.

FR. Calm yourself, Albin. I know the two. I have seen them play a dozen times already. Their speciality is the portrayal of pickpockets.

MAURICE *draws some purses out of his waistcoat.*

SCAEV. Well, you can do the handsome to-night.

ET. It was a very magnificent wedding. All the nobility of France was there. Even the King was represented.

ALBIN (*excited*). All that is true.

MAUR. (*rolls some money over the table*). That is for you, my friends, so that you can see that we all stick to one another.

FR. Properties, dear Albin. (*He stands up and takes a few coins.*) We, too, you see, come in for a share.

HOST. You take it—you have never earned anything so honestly in your life.

MAUR. (*holds in the air a garter set with diamonds*). And to whom shall I give this? (*GEORGETTE, MICHETTE, and FLIPOTTE make a rush after it.*) Patience, you sweet pussies. We will speak about that later on. I will give it to the one who devises a new caress.

SÉV. (*to ROLLIN*). Would you not like to let me join in the competition ?

ROLLIN. I protest you will drive me mad, Séverine.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

MARQUIS. Séverine, had we not better be going now? I think——

SÉV. Oh, no. I am enjoying myself excellently. (*To ROLLIN*) Ah well, my mood is getting so——

MICH. How did you get hold of the garter?

MAUR. There was such a crush in the church—and when a dame is pensive one starts courting her——
(*All laugh*). X

GRAIN *has stolen* FRANÇOIS's *purse*.

FR. (*showing the money to ALBIN*). Mere counters. Are you satisfied now?

GRAIN *wants to get away*.

HOST (*going after him softly*). Give me the purse at once which you took from this gentleman.

GRAIN. I——

HOST. Straight away . . . or it will be the worse for you.

GRAIN. You need not be churlish. (*Gives it to him*.)

HOST. And stay here. I have no time to search you now. Who knows what else you have pouched. Go back to your place.

FLIP. I shall win the garter.

HOST (*throwing the purse to FR.*). Here's your purse. You lost it out of your pocket.

FR. I thank you, Prosper. (*To ALBIN*) You see, we are in reality in the company of the most respectable people in the whole world.

HENRI, *who has already been present for a long time and has sat behind, suddenly stands up*.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

ROLLIN. Henri—there is Henri.

SÉV. Is he the one you told me so much about?

MARQUIS. Assuredly. The man one really comes here to see.

HENRI comes to the front of the stage, very theatrically ; is silent.

THE ACTORS. Henri, what ails you?

ROLLIN. Observe the look. A world of passion. You see, he is playing the man who commits a crime of passion.

SÉV. I prize that highly.

ALBIN. But why does he not speak?

ROLLIN. He is beside himself. Just watch. Pay attention . . . he has wrought a fearful deed somewhere.

FR. He is somewhat theatrical. It looks as though he were going to get ready for a monologue.

HOST. Henri, Henri, where do you come from?

HENRI. I have killed someone.

ROLLIN. What did I say?

SCAEV. Whom?

HENRI. The lover of my wife.

PROSPER looks at him ; at this moment he obviously has the feeling that it might be true.

HENRI (*looks up*). Well, yes, I've done it. What are you looking at me like that for? That's how the matter stands. Is it, then, so wonderful after all? You all know what kind of a creature my wife is ; it was bound to end like that.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

HOST. And she—where is she?

FR. See, the host takes it seriously. You notice how realistic that makes the thing.

Noise outside—not too loud.

JULES. What noise is that outside?

MARQUIS. Do you hear, Séverine?

ROLLIN. It sounds as though troops were marching by.

FR. Oh, no; it is our dear people of Paris. Just listen how they bawl. (*Uneusiness in the cellar; it grows quiet outside.*) Go on, Henri—go on.

HOST. Yes, do tell us, Henri—where is your wife? Where have you left her?

HENRI. Oh, I have no qualms about her. She will not die of it. Whether it is this man or that man, what do the women care? There are still a thousand other handsome men running about Paris—whether it is this man or that man——

BAL. May it fare thus with all who take our wives from us.

SCAEV. All who take from us what belongs to us.

COMM. (*to HOST*). These are seditious speeches.

ALBIN. It is dreadful . . . the people mean it seriously.

SCAEV. Down with the usurers of France! We would fain wager that the fellow whom he caught with his wife was another again of those accursed hounds who rob us of our bread as well.

ALBIN. I propose we go.

SÉV. Henri!—Henri!

THE GREEN COCKATOO

MARQUIS. But, Marquise——

sév. Please, dear Marquis, ask the man how he caught his wife—or I will ask him myself.

MARQUIS (*after resisting*). Tell us, Henri, how did you manage to catch the pair?

✓ HENRI (*who has been for a long while sunk in reverie*). Know you my wife, then? She is the fairest and vilest creature under the sun. And I loved her! We have known one another for seven years—but it is only yesterday that she became my wife. In those seven years there was not one day, nay, not one day, in which she did not lie to me, for everything about her is a lie—her eyes and her lips, her kisses and her smiles.

FR. He rants a little.

HENRI. Every boy and every old man, everyone who excited her and everyone who paid her—every one, I think, who wanted her—has possessed her, and I have known it!

sév. Not every one can boast as much.

HENRI. And all the same she loved me, my friends. Can any one of you understand that? She always came back to me again—from all quarters back again to me—from the handsome and from the ugly, from the shrewd and from the foolish, from ragamuffins and from courtiers—always came back to me.

sév. (*to ROLLIN*). Now, if only you had an inkling that it is just this coming back which is really love.

HENRI. What I suffered . . . tortures, tortures!

ROLLIN. It is harrowing.

HENRI. And yesterday I married her. We had a

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dream—nay, I had a dream. I wanted to get away with her from here. Into solitude, into the country, into the great peace. We wished to live like other happy married couples—we dreamt also of having a child——

ROLLIN (*softly*). Séverine.

SÉV. Very good!

ALBIN. François, that man is speaking the truth.

FR. Quite so; the love-story is true, but the real pith is the murder-story.

HENRI. I was just one day too late. . . . There was just one man whom she had forgotten, otherwise—I believe—she wouldn't have wanted anyone else. . . . But I caught them together . . . it is all over with him.

ACTORS. Who?—who? How did it happen? Where does he lie? Are you pursued? How did it happen? Where is she?

HENRI (*with growing excitement*). I escorted her . . . to the theatre . . . to-day was to be the last time. . . . I kissed her . . . at the door . . . and she went to her dressing-room . . . and I went off like a man who has nothing to fear. But when I had gone a hundred yards, I began . . . to have . . . within me—do you understand? . . . a terrible unrest . . . and it was as though something forced me to turn round . . . and I turned round and went back. But once there I felt ashamed and went away again . . . and again I walked a hundred yards away from the theatre . . . and then something gripped me . . . again I went back. Her scene was at an

THE GREEN COCKATOO

end—she hasn't got much to do, she just stands a while on the stage half naked—and then she has finished. I stood in front of her dressing-room, put my ear to the door, and heard whispers. I could not make out a word . . . the whispering ceased . . . I pushed open the door . . . (*he roars like a lion*) it was the Duc de Cadignan, and I murdered him.

HOST (*who now at last takes it for the truth*). Mad-man !

HENRI *looks up, gazes fixedly at* HOST.

SÉV. Bravo !—bravo !

ROLLIN. What are you doing, Marquise? The moment you call out "bravo!" you make it all acting again—and the pleasant shudder is past.

MARQUIS. I do not find the shudder so pleasant. Let us applaud, my friends; that is the only way we can throw off the spell.

A gentle bravo, growing continually louder ; all applaud.

HOST (*to HENRI, during the noise*). Save yourself—flee, Henri.

HENRI. What !—what !

HOST. Let this be enough, and see that you get away.

FR. Hush ! . . . Let us hear what the host says.

HOST (*after a short reflection*). I am telling him that he ought to get away before the watch at the city gates are informed. The handsome Duke was a favourite of the king—they will break you on the wheel. Far better had it been had you stabbed that scum, your wife.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

FR. What playing up to each other! . . . Splendid!

HENRI. Prosper, which of us is mad, you or I? (*He stands there and tries to read in PROSPER'S eyes.*)

ROLLIN. It is wonderful; we all know that he is acting, and yet if the Duc de Cadignan were to enter now, it would be like a ghost appearing.

Noise outside—growing stronger and stronger. People come in; shrieks are heard. Right at their head GRASSET. Others, among them LEBRÊT, force their way over the steps. Cries of "Liberty! Liberty!" are heard.

GRASSET. Here we are, my boys—in here!

ALBIN. What is that? Is that part of the performance?

FR. No.

MARQUIS. What means it?

SÉV. What people are those?

GRASSET. In here! I tell you, my friend Prosper has still got a bottle of wine left, and we have earned it. (*Noise from the streets.*) Friend! Brother! We have them!—we have them!

SHOUTS (*from outside*). Liberty! Liberty!

SÉV. What has happened?

MARQUIS. Let us get away—let us get away; the mob approaches.

ROLLIN. How do you propose to get away?

GRASSET. It has fallen; the Bastille has fallen!

HOST. What say you? Speaks he the truth?

THE GREEN COCKATOO

GRASSET. Hear you not ?

ALBIN *wants to draw his sword.*

FR. Stop that at once, or we are all lost.

GRASSET (*reeling in down the stairs*). And if you hasten, you will still be in time to see quite a merry sight . . . the head of our dear Delaunay stuck on a very high pole.

MARQUIS. Is the fellow mad ?

SHOUTS. Liberty ! Liberty !

GRASSET. We have cut off a dozen heads ; the Bastille belongs to us ; the prisoners are free ! Paris belongs to the people !

HOST. Hear you ?—hear you ? Paris belongs to us !

GRASSET. See you how he gains courage now. Yes, shout away, Prosper ; naught more can happen to you now.

HOST (*to the nobles*). What say you to it, you rabble ? The joke is at an end.

ALBIN. Said I not so ?

HOST. The people of Paris have conquered.

COMM. Silence ! (*They laugh.*) Silence ! I forbid the continuance of the performance !

GRASSET. Who is that nincompoop ?

COMM. Prosper, I regard you as responsible for all these seditious speeches.

GRASSET. Is the fellow mad ?

HOST. The joke is at an end. Don't you understand ? Henri, do you tell them—now you must tell them. We will protect you—the people of Paris will protect you.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

GRASSET. Yea, the people of Paris.

HENRI *stands there with a fixed stare.*

HOST. Henri has murdered the Duc de Cadignan.

ALBIN, FR., *and* MARQUIS. What says he?

ALBIN *and* OTHERS. What means all this, Henri?

FR. Henri, pray speak.

HOST. He found him with his wife and he has killed him.

HENRI. 'Tis not true!

HOST. You need fear naught more now; now you can shout it out to all the world. I could have told you an hour past, that she was the Duke's mistress. By God, I was nigh telling you—is't not true, you, Shrieking Pumice-stone?—did we not know it?

HENRI. Who has seen her? Where has she been seen?

HOST. What matters that to you now? The man's mad . . . you have killed him; of a truth you cannot do more.

FR. In heaven's name, is't really true or not?

HOST. Ay, it is true.

GRASSET. Henri, from henceforth you must be my friend. Vive la Liberté!—Vive la Liberté!

FR. Henri, speak, man!

HENRI. She was his mistress? She was the mistress of the Duke? I knew it not . . . he lives . . . he lives . . . (*Tremendous sensation.*)

SÉV. (*to the others*). Well, where's the truth now?

ALBIN. My God!

THE GREEN COCKATOO

The DUKE forces his way through the crowd on the steps.

SÉV. (*who sees him first*). The Duke!

SOME VOICES. The Duke!

DUKE. Well, well, what is it?

HOST. Is it a ghost?

DUKE. Not that I know of. Let me through!

ROLLIN. What won't we wager that it is all arranged! The fellows yonder belong to Prosper's troupe. Bravo, Prosper! This is a real success.

DUKE. What is it? Is the playing still going on here, while outside . . . but don't you know what manner of things are taking place outside? I have seen Delaunay's head carried past on a pole. Nay, why do you look at me like that? (*Steps down.*) Henri——

FR. Guard yourself from Henri.

HENRI *rushes like a madman on the DUKE and plunges a sword into his neck.*

COMM. (*stands up*). This goes too far!

ALL. He bleeds!

ROLLIN. A murder has been done here.

SÉV. The Duke is dying.

MARQUIS. I am distracted, dear Séverine, to think that to-day of all days I should have brought you to this place.

SÉV. Why not? (*In a strained tone*) It is a wonderful success. One does not see a real duke really murdered every day.

ROLLIN. I cannot grasp it yet.

THE GREEN COCKATOO

COMM. Silence! Let no one leave the place!

GRASSET. What does he want?

COMM. I arrest this man in the name of the law.

GRASSET (*laughs*). It is we who make the laws, you blockheads! Out with the rabble! He who kills a duke is a friend of the people. Vive la Liberté!

ALBIN (*draws his sword*). Make way! Follow me, my friends!

LÉOCADIE *rushes in over the steps.*

VOICES. His wife!

LÉOCADIE. Let me in here. I want my husband!
(*She comes to the front, sees, and shrieks out.*) Who has done this? Henri!

HENRI *looks at her.*

LÉOCADIE. Why have you done this?

HENRI. Why?

LÉOCADIE. I know why. Because of me. Nay, nay, say not 'twas because of me. Never in all my life have I been worth that.

GRASSET (*begins a speech*). Citizens of Paris, we will celebrate our victory. Chance has led us on our way through the streets of Paris to this amiable host. It could not have fitted in more prettily. Nowhere can the cry "Vive la Liberté!" ring sweeter than over the corpse of a duke.

VOICES. Vive la Liberté! Vive la Liberté!

FR. I think we might go. The people have gone mad. Let us go.

ALBIN. Shall we leave the corpse here?

SÉV. Vive la Liberté! Vive la Liberté!

THE GREEN COCKATOO

MARQUIS. Are you mad ?

CITIZENS *and* ACTORS. Vive la Liberté! Vive la Liberté!

SÉV. (*leading the nobles to the exit*). Rollin, wait you to-night outside my window. I will throw the key down like t'other night. We will pass a pretty hour—I feel quite pleasurably excited.

SHOUTS. Vive la Liberté! Vive Henri! Vive Henri!

LEBRÊT. Look at the fellows—they are running away from us.

GRASSET. Let them for to-night—let them ; they will not escape us.

CURTAIN

THE MATE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR ROBERT PILGRAM.

DOCTOR ALFRED HAUSMANN.

PROFESSOR WERKMANN.

PROFESSOR BRAND.

OLGA MERHOLM.

A SERVANT.

The Scene takes place in a summer resort not far from Vienna.

Time : an Autumn Evening.

THE MATE

An artistic room. Wall-paper and furniture in light tones, mostly blue. A lady's escritoire on the Left in front; piano on the Right. On the Right a door, on the Left a door. In the background a large open door which leads on to the balcony. A view onto the landscape; a street with a gradual incline extending a long distance, eventually shut off from view by a churchyard wall. The wall is not high; gravestones and crosses can be seen. Far away in the distance mountains in a haze, not very high. It is late in the evening, nearly night, the country is plunged in darkness, pale moonlight in the lonely streets. ROBERT comes out of the room on the Right, leading in two gentlemen, PROFESSOR WERKMANN and PROFESSOR BRAND.

ROBERT. I'm afraid it's very dark here, gentlemen: I'll fetch a light.

WERKMANN. Thank you, my good friend, we can manage to find our way quite well.

ROB. Just one minute. (*Exit.*)

WERKMANN and BRAND stand alone in the darkness.

THE MATE

WERK. He is very self-possessed.

BRAND. It's all pose.

WERK. When a man is burying his wife, he doesn't go in for any poses. You take it from me; I've been through it all. What would be the point of it?

BRAND. You don't know what Pilgram is like. It's tremendously effective, don't you see, to bury one's wife in the afternoon and then go and debate scientific subjects for two hours on end in the evening. You see—you were taken in by it as well.

WERK. All the same, one must be a thorough man——

BRAND. Or a thorough——

Enter ROBERT with a candlestick, in which two candles are burning.

ROB. Here I am, gentlemen. (*The room is only half illuminated.*)

WERK. Where are we, then?

ROB. It was my poor wife's room. Those little steps lead straight to the garden gate, and in five minutes you will be at the station.

BRAND. We shall be in time, then, for the nine o'clock train?

ROB. Of course.

The door on the Right opens, the servant enters. He has a wreath in his hand.

ROB. What is it?

SERVANT. Some one from the town has just been here and left this wreath.

THE MATE

ROB. Just now ?

WERK. Probably one of your friends who learnt the news too late. You'll see, you'll get some more of these melancholy offerings to-morrow. Yes, yes—I know all about it, unfortunately.

ROB. (*has read the inscription on the ribbon*). From my assistant; (*explaining*) he's still on the north coast.

BRAND. So Dr. Hausmann is on the north coast !

SERV. Where shall I put the wreath, sir ?

WERK. The flowers have a shockingly strong scent.

BRAND. Of course they have. They are tuberoses.

ROB. Yes, and lilacs. (*To the servant*) On the balcony.

The SERVANT does as he is ordered, then exit.

WERK. Your assistant is still on his holiday ?

ROB. He'll be back soon, anyway. Probably by to-morrow.

WERK. I suppose you will let him take your place at the beginning of the term.

ROB. Not a bit of it ! I have not the slightest intention of making a break in my work.

WERK. (*shaking his hand*). Quite right, my dear friend ; work is the only consolation.

ROB. There's this point as well. Even supposing it wasn't a consolation, it is very questionable if we should be justified in throwing a portion of our

THE MATE

short existence clean away. Once we have had the calamity to survive most of what——

Exit with them, letting them go first.

WERK. (*to BRAND*). He never loved his wife.

BRAND. Well, never mind.

All exeunt on the Right ; stage empty for a few minutes. OLGA enters on the Left ; she is in a dark evening dress without a hat, with a light fur wrap thrown over her. SERVANT comes in from the balcony.

SERV. Good evening, madam.

OLGA. I suppose the Professor is in the garden ?

SERV. The Professor has two gentlemen——

OLGA makes a sign to the SERVANT, as ROBERT comes in on the Left without noticing her.

ROB. (*going to the escritoire*). I say, Franz, do you know the exact time the last train from town gets here ?

SERV. At ten o'clock, sir.

ROB. I see. (*Pause.*) It's possible that Dr. Hausmann will get here to-night. In that case I want you to show him in immediately.

SERV. Here ?

ROB. Yes, here, if I happen to be in this room.

Exit SERVANT, and ROBERT sits down at the escritoire and begins to open it.

THE MATE

OLGA (*going behind him.*) Good evening.

ROB. (*coldly*). Olga! (*He stands up.*)

OLGA (*in an embarrassment, which she strains every nerve to master, succeeding for isolated moments*). I've never had a chance the whole day of pressing your hand.

ROB. Quite true! We've scarcely exchanged a single word. I thank you. (*Holds out his hand.*)

OLGA. You have many friends—to-day proved it.

ROB. Yes, the last two have only just gone.

OLGA. Who was here so late, then?

ROB. Brand, and that snivelling windbag Werkmann. He's fatuously proud of the fact that he lost his own wife last year. That's the real truth. He talks about these matters like an expert, the disgusting fellow—— (*Pause.*) But to think of your leaving your villa so late!

OLGA. Do you think I am frightened of taking the path across the fields alone?

ROB. No; but your husband will be uneasy.

OLGA. Oh, no! He quite believes that I am already asleep in my room. Besides, I very often go for a walk in the garden late in the evening—you ought to know that.

ROB. In our avenue, you mean?

OLGA. Our——? You mean the one along the trellis?

ROB. Yes; I always think of it as only for you and me.

OLGA. I often wander about in it, all alone.

ROB. But not at night?

THE MATE

OLGA. In the evenings. It is most beautiful then.

ROB. Your garden has something very peaceful about it.

OLGA. Yes, hasn't it? (*sincerely*). Anyway, you must soon come and see us. You'll feel much better with us—than you do here.

ROB. That's quite possible. (*He looks at her, and then turns towards the back.*) You see, that leads outside. (*OLGA nods*).

ROB. It's hard to believe that it happened only a few hours ago. Can you bring yourself to realise that this same dark path was once bathed in sunlight? (*Pause.*) When I close my eyes—I suddenly see the sun again. Strange! I even hear the rumble of the carriages. (*Pause. He is very nervous and distraught in his manner.*) You are quite right, there were an awful lot of people there. When one thinks that everybody came from town—it's really quite a journey. Have you seen the wreath from my pupils?

OLGA. Of course!

ROB. Magnificent, isn't it? And all that sympathy! Some of my colleagues have even broken up their holiday in order to come; it is really extraordinarily—what's the word—"considerate," isn't it?

OLGA. It's perfectly natural.

ROB. I daresay it is; but I ask myself if all my grief really deserves this sympathy or this expression of sympathy.

OLGA (*almost shocked*). How can you say that?

ROB. Because I myself feel so little. I only know that she is dead—but I realise this with such awful

THE MATE

clearness that it tortures me—everything is as cold and clear as the air on a winter day.

OLGA. It won't remain so. The pain will come, and that will be much better.

ROB. Who knows if it will come—it is too long ago.

OLGA (*frigidly*). Too long ago!—what is too long ago?

ROB. Since she—lived for me—since we lived for each other.

OLGA. Yes, that's usually the case in most marriages. (*She goes to the balcony and looks at the wreath.*)

ROB. It arrived late this evening—from Doctor Hausmann.

OLGA. Oh! (*She looks at the inscription on the ribbon. ROBERT looks at OLGA; she notices it.*) He isn't here yet?

ROB. No! But I telegraphed to him at once at Scheveningen, and I regard it as quite on the cards that he'll still arrive to-night. If, when he gets to Vienna, he drives across from one station to the other——

OLGA. He'll be sure to do that.

ROB. In that case he will be here in an hour.

OLGA (*with forced confidence*). What a great shock it must have been to him.

ROB. No doubt. (*Pause; quietly*). Be frank with me, Olga. There must be some reason at the bottom of your coming here again; I can see it in your manner. Just tell me quite simply what it is.

OLGA. It is harder than I thought.

THE MATE

ROB. (*impatently, but with great mastery over himself*). Well, then?

OLGA. I came to ask a favour of you.

ROB. If I can do it.

OLGA. Quite easily. It's about some letters which I wrote to poor Eveline, and which I should like to have back.

ROB. Why in such a hurry?

OLGA. I thought that when everything was all over, the first thing that you would do, would of course be——

ROB. What?

OLGA (*pointing to the escritoire*). What you were on the point of doing when I came in. (*In a mollifying tone*) I would do the same thing if anyone whom I loved had died.

ROB. (*with nervous excitement*). "Loved"—"loved."

OLGA. Well, say who was very dear to me—it's just a way of recalling a person. (*She speaks the following lines like a passage she has learnt by heart.*) But it might have chanced that just my letters would fall into your hands first—it was to prevent that that I came here to-night. Those letters contain things which you must not read under any circumstances—things which were only intended for another woman—especially certain letters which I wrote two or three years ago.

ROB. Where are they, then? Perhaps you know where they can be found.

OLGA. I'll find them at once, if you will allow me——

THE MATE

ROB. Are you going to——?

OLGA. I think that's the simplest way, as I know where they are. But you can open the drawer and I will tell you exactly——

ROB. It is not necessary : here is the key.

OLGA. Thank you. But you mustn't think me in any way disingenuous over all this.

ROB. Why? Why should I?

OLGA. Sometime I'll tell you the whole thing—I mean what up to the present only Eveline knew—even at the risk of your losing your regard for me. But you must not learn it by accident—like this.

ROB. I shall never lose my regard for you.

OLGA. Who knows? You always thought too highly of me.

ROB. I don't think, anyway, that I could learn anything new about you from those letters. I'm sure it's not your own secrets you want to preserve.

OLGA (*shrewdly*). Whose should they be, then?

ROB. Somebody else's secrets, I should think.

OLGA. What are you thinking about? Eveline had no secrets from you.

ROB. I ask no questions—take your letters.

OLGA (*unlocks the escritoire, looks in the drawer*). Here they are. Yes. (*She takes out a little packet tied together with a blue ribbon, holding it in such a way that ROBERT cannot see it, and finally conceals it, but not too palpably, under her wrap.*) Thank you very much. Now I must go. Good-bye. (*She gets up to go.*)

ROB. Wouldn't it be advisable to look in the

THE MATE

other drawer as well? Only a single note need be left behind—and all your precautions are useless.

OLGA (*less confidently*). What do you mean?—"useless"?

ROB. You could have spared yourself the trouble, Olga.

OLGA. What do you mean? I don't understand you at all.

ROB. You say that of all people, you who knew perfectly well the relations existing between Eveline and myself?

OLGA. After one has been married ten years—But that hasn't got anything to do with my letters.

ROB. And you think that even ten years ago I was under any illusion? That would be extremely foolish on the part of a man who married a wife twenty years younger than himself. I knew perfectly well that I had one or two beautiful years at the outside to look forward to. Yes! I was perfectly clear on the point. One can't talk about being under an illusion. But after all, how many years have we got? Life is not long enough for a man to be able straight away to give up a year of happiness. Besides, a year is enough—at any rate, for the happiness one gets out of women. I mean, of course, women with whom one is in love. One has soon finished with them. There are a lot of other things in life which are much more important.

OLGA. That's possible—but one doesn't always realise it.

THE MATE

ROB. I always realised it. She never really filled my life, not even in that year of happiness. In a certain sense she more than filled it—her atmosphere, if you know what I mean. But even her atmosphere must needs of course be dissipated. All these things are really quite obvious. (*He speaks with increasing emotion, but still externally calm.*) We had nothing more in common than the memory of a short-lived happiness, and I can tell you that that kind of common memories separates people rather than unites them.

OLGA. I can conceive of it turning out quite differently.

ROB. So can I. But not with a creature like Eveline. She was made to be a mistress, not a mate. You know that as well as I do.

OLGA. Mate! That's a very big word. How many women are really fitted to be that?

ROB. I never asked it of her. As a matter of fact, I never felt lonely. A man who has a calling (I don't mean an occupation—a calling, I say) can never feel lonely, whatever happens.

OLGA (*unenthusiastically*). That's the splendid thing about men—I mean men like you.

ROB. And when our happiness came to an end, I returned to my own life, which, as you know, she didn't understand much about, and went my own way—as she did hers.

OLGA. No, that wasn't the case. No! no!

ROB. Oh yes, it was! She told you more than you will tell me. So far as I'm concerned, it's quite un-

THE MATE

necessary to take any letters away. There are no surprises, and no discoveries left for me. What do you really want? You are positively pathetic. You want to leave me an illusion—no, to envelop me in one, of which I have never been the victim. I know that I lost her long ago—long ago. (*With increasing excitement*) Or do you think I imagine for a single minute that when Eveline and I ceased to belong to each other, she proceeded to cut short her whole life? that she suddenly became an old woman because she had left me—or I her? I never believed that.

OLGA. But, Robert, I can't make out why you should get such notions into your head.

ROB. I know whose the letters are; they are not yours. I know that there is somebody in the world who is far more deeply to be pitied than I am—somebody who loved her. It is he who has lost her, not I—not I. You see that, so far as I am concerned, all this is unnecessary. It can only be that one who——

OLGA. You have made an awful mistake.

ROB. Please leave the subject, Olga. Otherwise I may end by reading those letters. (*Noticing a movement of Olga's*) I won't do it, Olga. We will burn them before he comes.

OLGA. You will do that?

ROB. Yes! I intended to do so before you came. I should have thrown all the contents of this escritoire into the fire without looking at them.

OLGA. Yes, I am sure you would not have done that.

THE MATE

ROB. You need not reproach yourself in any way. Perhaps it's a good thing that I know everything now, without having to look at the letters. At any rate, it makes things clear, and that's the one boon that we ought to ask of life.

OLGA (*seriously*). You might have asked a great deal more.

ROB. I did, long ago, and then I did not ask in vain; but now—— She was young, and I was old. That's the whole story: we'd understand it right enough in the case of other people—whynot in this one?

At that moment a locomotive whistles in the distance. OLGA gives a start. Pause.

OLGA. As a favour to me, don't see him till to-morrow.

ROB. Do you think that I'm not calm? Do you really think that I——? There's only one thing I've got to be careful about. He must never learn that I know—if he did, he would only suspect forgiveness and generosity in every word I spoke. No! I don't want that. That's not the case at all. I never hated him—I don't hate him; there's not the slightest reason why I should hate him, or the slightest reason why I should forgive him. I understand the whole thing far too well. She belonged to him—we mustn't forget the real point. Don't let us once more get so confused by the force of the conventional position as to forget that. It was to him that she belonged, not to me—and it couldn't have gone on much longer.

THE MATE

OLGA. Please, Robert, don't see him to-night.

ROB. You know perfectly well that she wanted to leave me.

OLGA. How should I know that?

ROB. Because she confided in you.

OLGA. Oh no!

ROB. How did you know, then, where these letters were to be found?

OLGA. I found out by chance once when she—read—one of them—when I was there—I didn't mean to hear—but——

ROB. But she had to have a confidante—of course she had. And you couldn't help being hers—that's all perfectly clear to me. No—things couldn't have gone on much longer. Do you think I haven't seen how both of them were ashamed of their lives—how both of them suffered? Why, I have actually longed for the moment to come when they should come to me and say, "Please free us." Why didn't they have the pluck? Why didn't I say to them, "Go, then. I won't keep you"? But we were all too cowardly—they and I. That's the senseless part of the whole thing. We always keep waiting for something to turn up to put an end to an impossible position—something that would have spared us the trouble of being honest with each other; and now and then that something does turn up, as in our case. (*The noise of a carriage; short silence. OLGA very moved. ROBERT deliberately calm, goes on speaking.*) And one must acknowledge that at any rate it was a dignified end. (*The carriage stops.*)

THE MATE

OLGA. You will—see him ?

ROB. He must not see the letters.

OLGA. Let me go ; I'll take them away.

ROB. This way, down these steps.

OLGA. I hear his step.

ROB. He has come through the garden, then.
(*Takes the letters out of her hand and quickly shuts them up again in the drawer.*) You stay. It is too late. (*Steps outside.*)

ALFRED comes in quickly; he wears a dark travelling-suit. He is slightly embarrassed when he sees OLGA. ROBERT goes forward to meet him, but remains standing after a few steps and waits for him to approach. ALFRED shakes hands with him, and then goes up to OLGA and shakes hands with her. A short silence.

ALFRED. We could never have dreamt of anything like this, seeing each other under these circumstances, could we ?

ROB. You can't have stopped a minute in town, old man.

ALF. No ! I couldn't, and be here to-night—and I had to. (*To OLGA*) Shocking—shocking ! How did it happen ? I know nothing at all. Just a word, I implore you.

ROBERT *doesn't answer.*

OLGA. It happened quite suddenly.

ALF. A heart attack, then ?

THE MATE

ROB. Yes.

ALF. Without any previous symptoms?

ROB. Without any previous symptoms.

ALF. And when? where?

ROB. Two days ago in the afternoon, while she was going for her walk in the garden. The gardener saw her fall—just near the pond. I heard him shout from my room—and when I came down it was all over.

ALF. My poor dear fellow! What you must have suffered! One can't realise it—that young and vital——

OLGA. Perhaps it's the most beautiful fate.

ALF. That's poor consolation.

ROB. My telegram must have been delayed, I suppose?

ALF. Yes; otherwise I should have been here much earlier in the day. Yes, if there were such things as presentiments, something would have made me come home much earlier.

OLGA. But there aren't.

ALF. Quite true. It was a day just like any other—if possible, brighter and more cheerful than usual.

ROB. More cheerful than usual.

ALF. Of course—I remember it now. We had gone for a sail, right out into the sea, and then in the cool of the evening we went for a walk on the sands.

ROB. "We"?

ALF. Of course—a whole lot of us. And when I

THE MATE

came back to the hotel I stood by my window looking out on to the sea for perhaps a quarter of an hour. I then turned on the light, and there was the telegram lying on the table. Ah! (*Pause—he holds his hand in front of his eyes. OLGA looks at ROBERT, who is looking straight in front of him. ALFRED takes his hands away from his eyes.*) So this is—(*heavily*) her room!

ROB. Yes.

ALF. How often we used to sit here on the balcony. (*Turning round, he looks out on to the street and sees the churchyard wall. Shudders.*) Over there?

ROBERT nods.

ALF. We will go there together to-morrow.

ROB. And you can put your wreath there yourself, Alfred. It has just arrived.

Pause.

ALF. What are you going to do now, Robert?

ROB. What do you mean?

OLGA. I have asked the Professor to spend as much time as he possibly can with us at the villa during the next few months.

ALF. He certainly shouldn't stay here. You shouldn't stay in the place, Robert, where——

ROB. In any case I shall remove to town in the beginning of October. It's not long to wait. Besides, I shall look in at the laboratory once or twice. The two Americans who were here last year have been working since the end of August.

THE MATE

ALF. Yes, you told me that in your last letter. But you mustn't go to town on that account. You surely are not going to begin work straight away?

ROB. You really upset my nerves, Alfred. What else am I to do? I assure you that I am in the mood for work and nothing else.

ALF. But you won't be able to now.

ROB. You're saying just what all the others say. I feel perfectly competent; why, I've even got a real desire for work.

ALF. I quite understand that; but that desire, as a matter of fact, is deceptive. I've got an idea (*sincerely*). Come away with me. You'll give me a few more days' leave, and I'll take you with me. What do you say to that, Frau Merholm?

OLGA (*labouredly*). A very good idea.

ROB. You want to go away—you want to go away now, Alfred?

ALF. In any case I was going to ask you for a few more days.

ROB. But where do you want to go to, then?

ALF. I want to go to the seaside again.

ROB. Back?

ALF. Yes, but with you. It will do you good—take it from me. Am I not right, Frau Merholm?

OLGA. Oh yes!

ALF. You'll travel with me to Scheveningen, and there spend a quiet few days with us.

ROB. "Us"—you say "us"?

ALF (*slightly embarrassed*). Yes.

THE MATE

ROB. What do you mean by "us"? Aren't you alone, then?

ALF. Of course I'm alone; but there are people in Scheveningen, don't you know, whom I see something of. There are some with whom I——

ROB. Well?

ALF. I was going to tell you in a few days, anyway; but as this is the psychological moment—to put it shortly—I've got engaged there.

ROB. (*quite coldly*). Oh!

ALF. It makes no odds whether I tell you to-day or to-morrow; the world goes round all the same. It is rather strange that just now——

ROB. Yes—I congratulate you.

ALF. That's why I said "with us" before; and now you will understand why I want to go back again.

ROB. That's perfectly easy to understand.

ALF. But please come, too. Her parents will be quite delighted to make your acquaintance. I've told them such a lot about you. They are charming people; and as for the girl, well, you'll see for yourself.

ROB. I don't think—I don't think—I—— I shall have an opportunity later on. (*He keeps up his pose of calmness with a great strain, but with complete success.*) It's really quite a mad idea of yours that I should go with you now to the north coast to be introduced to your fiancée. How many millions has she got, by-the-bye?

ALF. (*offended*). What a question to ask! I am really not the kind of man to marry for money——

THE MATE

ROB. So it's a *grande passion*, is it?

ALF. Please, Robert, don't let's talk about it any more to-day. It's like—— (*He half says, "desecration."*)

ROB. Why not? As you have rightly remarked, "The world goes round all the same." Let us confine ourselves to the land of the living. Where did you meet her?

ALF. She lives in Vienna.

ROB. Oh! Now I know all about it.

ALF. Quite impossible.

ROB. Once you told me, don't you remember, about a fair-haired sweetheart of yours when you were still a student——

ALF. Well, what about it?

ROB. Well, meeting again after a long time—rebirth of the old love.

ALF. So that's what you think, is it? No, it's not she. I have only known my fiancée for the last two years, and I went to the seaside in order to see her.

ROB. So it was there that you fell in love with her.

ALF. Oh, I have known for ages that she was going to be my wife.

ROB. Really!

ALF. We have been secretly engaged for a year.

ROB. And you didn't breathe a word of it to me—to us. Oh!

ALF. There were certain reasons to be taken into account—her family was at first—but we understood

THE MATE

each other from the beginning. I am in a position to say that it was a case of love at first sight.

ROB. Starting two years back ?

ALF. Yes.

ROB. You were in love with her ?

ALF. Yes.

ROB. And—she with you ?

ALF. (*almost mechanically*). And she with me.

ROB. And what about the other woman ?—the other woman ?

ALF. What other woman ?

ROB. (*holding him by the shoulder and pointing over the street with the other hand*). The one over there. (*ALFRED glances at OLGA.*) What did you do with her ?

ALF. (*after a pause, leaning on the window*). Why have you been playing with me all this time, Robert, if you knew ? Why, if you already knew, did you speak to me like a friend ? You had the right to do anything to me that you wanted, but not to play with me.

ROB. It was not a case of playing. I would have raised you from the ground if you had been broken by grief. I would have gone with you to her grave—if the woman who is lying over there had been your love ; but you have turned her into your wanton, and you have filled this house with lies and foulness right up to the roof till it makes me sick—and that's why—that's why, yes, that's why I'm going to kick you out.

THE MATE

ALF. Perhaps I could explain even this.

ROB. Clear out—clear out—clear out!

Exit ALFRED.

ROB. So that's what you wanted to save me from? Yes, I understand now; lucky for her that she passed away without an idea—of what she really meant to him.

OLGA (*turns towards him*). Without an idea?

ROB. What do you mean?

OLGA (*after reflecting for a short time*). She—knew it.

ROB. What—she actually——

OLGA. She knew what she meant to him. Don't you see the whole situation? He neither deceived her nor humiliated her. Why, she had been prepared for his marriage as a matter of course for quite a long time. And when he wrote to her (*points to the escritoire*) she shed as few tears for him—as he did for her. They would never have come to you—to ask you for their freedom; they had all the freedom they wanted.

ROB. She—knew it? But you!—you wanted to hide those letters from me——

OLGA. Am I not giving you your freedom back again? For years and years you suffered at the hands of that woman—rushed from one self-deception into another, which made you love her more, and consequently suffer more. And now you want to torture yourself still further on account of a calamity which you only imagine, and which this particular

THE MATE

woman was absolutely incapable of ever suffering, because she found life so easy, in a way that people like you can never understand.

ROB. And to think that I should know for the first time to-day!—for the first time! Why didn't you, who saw the whole thing, shake me out of my weakness? Why couldn't I know a year ago? Even three days ago——

OLGA. I was afraid to do so—just as you would have been. Yes, as you would have been. You should have known—either not at all—or to-day.

ROB. Does it make any difference, her being dead?

OLGA. No difference at all! But it is clear, as it otherwise would never have been. So long as she was alive, her very existence—her very smile, would have given some semblance of importance to this miserable trumpery adventure—— You could not have felt what you feel to-day, now that she is beyond the reach of your anger—and perhaps it will give you peace to think how far, how infinitely far, that woman lived away from you—that woman who just happened to die in your house. (*Exit.*)

ROBERT *is silent for a short time; he then locks the escritoire drawer; then he stands up, goes to the door and calls*
“Franz.”

SERV. Yes, sir.

ROB. I am going away early to-morrow. Get everything ready, and have a cab at the house by seven o'clock.

THE MATE

SERV. Very good, sir.

ROB. (*after short pause*). I'll give you all further directions to-morrow. Now you can go to bed. (*As the SERV. stays*) I'll lock this room up myself—it is to remain locked up until I come back.

SERV. Very good, sir.

ROB. Good-night.

SERV. Good-night, sir. (*Exit on the Right.*)

ROBERT *immediately locks the door. He then goes to the balcony; when he is about to close the windows, he notices the wreath. He picks it up, brings it into the room, and places it on the escritoire. He then goes to the door on the Left, with a light in his hand; he remains standing by the door, turns and looks round the room once more. He takes a deep breath, and then gives a smile of relief, and exit. The noise of his locking up is heard. The dark room remains empty for a time, then the curtain falls.*

PARACELSUS

A PLAY IN VERSE IN ONE ACT

CHARACTERS

CYPRIAN, *an Armourer.*

JUSTINA, *his wife.*

CECILIA, *her sister.*

DOCTOR COPUS, *Town Physician.*

ANSELM, *a Gallant.*

THEOPHRASTUS BOMBASTUS HOHENHEIM, *styled*
PARACELSUS.

The Scene takes place in Basel at the beginning of the sixteenth century, on a fine June morning, in the house of CYPRIAN.

PARACELSUS

A room in CYPRIAN'S house. The room is well furnished and has two doors, one leading L. into JUSTINA'S room, the other R. into the ante-room. JUSTINA sits at the window busy with some work (at a distaff). Enter CECILIA.

SCENE I

JUSTINA (*looking up quickly*). What? back be-
times?

CECILIA. Too noisy is the town. (*She sits down.*)
My head so ached, I needs must hie me home.
Had'st thou been with me in the market-place,
Thou had'st returned with me.

JUSTINA.

Why so?

CECILIA.

Since yonder
Teems such a press and babble of wild tongues
That no one in their wits can suffer it.

JUSTINA. Is there? What's to be seen? Are new
jugglers come?

CECILIA. But did the girl not gossip?

JUSTINA.

She came not.

PARACELSUS

CECILIA. Nay, of a truth, she comes not home to-day.

The whole of Basel stands there wonderbound,
For all stream thither and all there remain,
As though the greatest wonder were on view.

JUSTINA. Prithee, what wonder sayst, thou crazy thing?

CECILIA. 'Tis but a mere quacksalver—nothing more.

JUSTINA. That only, sister?

CECILIA. Ay, we have already
Had here enow o' fellows of that kidney.
But what in him they so surpassing find——?

JUSTINA. He must be famous, or has travelled far—
Didst thou not hear his name?

CECILIA. There buzzed and buzzed
So many round me, I forgot it all.
Praise God that I am home—my head is spinning.

SCENE II

JUSTINA, CECILIA. *Enter* DR. COPUS.

DR. C. I wish you both good morrow, worthy ladies.

JUSTINA. You come betimes (*smiling*). The child is sick again.

DR. C. Then 'tis the first to-day that waiteth me,
For all the others from me run away.

JUSTINA. Where are they?

DR. C. Where are they? Why, in the market!
Sir Paracelsus hath appeared to us:
What need remains of Doctor Copus now?

PARACELSUS

CECILIA. Why, yes, 'twas Paracelsus.

JUSTINA.

Paracelsus !

So it is he, that high renownèd leech !

DR. C. (*angry*). What say you ?—high renownèd ?

CECILIA (*mollifying*). She means it not.

DR. C. And “leech” ? Then prithee dub me quack-salver,

And call me all unknown, if Paracelsus

Renownèd is, and leech !

CECILIA (*almost anxiously*). What is he then ?

DR. C.

A knave,

And now enough ! (*Breaks off.*) How are you,
gracious Mistress ? (*Feels CECILIA's pulse.*)

A little quick.

CECILIA. Have I not got the fever ?

DR. C. Did you the powder duly take this morn ?

CECILIA. For sure ; as you prescribed it, Dr.
Copus ;

But, marry, my pulse is still too quick.

DR. C.

And marry,

Had you perchance forborne to take the powder

’Twere twice as quick.

CECILIA.

Do you prescribe another

For me to-day ?

DR. C.

Your tongue, an so you please.

CECILIA *puts out her tongue.*

DR. C. Mistress, not bad ; your tongue will pass,
methinks.

CECILIA. ’Tis many a day since so my head did ache.

DR. C. (*without listening to her, suddenly enraged*

PARACELSUS

again). And know you who stands yonder with the crowd?

JUSTINA. Who is't? and where?

DR. C. Our Master Cyprian
Stands in the mart and listens to the knave.

JUSTINA. My husband——

DR. C. He who whilom scorned such folk
As homeless tramp in rags about the streets
Stands in the market—nay, stands on the steps
That lead to Paracelsus' wooden platform,
And hears, and sees, and wonders, and goes mad.

JUSTINA. But tell me, pray, what is so wonderful
About that man?

DR. C. Now I find wonderful
But this—the mighty impudence he shows—
One word, which I did hear with mine own ears :
“ My beard hath deeper erudition
Than all the scribes and doctors in the world.”

JUSTINA. A jest—so rings it!

DR. C. Yea, defend him then :
He mocketh Avicennas, scorneth Galen,
Belittles all the men that were before him
And brought our art to this its lofty height ;
Jeers at the school from which himself did spring,
Reviles the leeches and apothecaries ;
And the good people's claps and cries to catch,
What think you that the shameless fellow does—
Does with the physick that sick men have brought
him ?

The draughts he poureth out upon the ground,
Far hurls the bottles from him into space,

PARACELSUS

And simply blows the powder in the air,
And shouts the while: A new Hippocrates
And more than that am I, I, Paracelsus,
And all your leeches are crabbed simpletons.

JUSTINA. And Cyprian stands there?

DR. C. With ears aprick!

And half of Basel with him stands and gapes.
And mine own very patients I beheld—
That yonder stand and wait upon his counsel.

JUSTINA. Prescribes he?

DR. C. Will you go to him perchance?

Marry! He doth prescribe—and think you not
To-morrow's death-roll giveth ample proof?
But I would fainer say to you: Farewell,
I go unto the Council, and mine office
Resign; and then what crumbs of life remain
Far from ungrateful Basel I'll enjoy.

CECILIA. Sir Doctor! And my head? What shall
I do?

DR. C. Marry, I'll show you how the knave contrives.

JUSTINA. Ay, prithee, show us that.

CECILIA. Upon my aches

Will you with that man's arts experiment?

DR. C. What, Madam, have you headache?

CECILIA. Nay, you know it.

DR. C. As Paracelsus speak I now: take heed,
Now gaze at me. (*He fixes her, makes magnetic
gestures with hand.*) The headache's flown
away.

CECILIA. I have it still—and stronger than before.

DR. C. So doth he do! And all without a powder—

PARACELSUS

And rails withal at those who do not likewise.
And there you have his much-belauded art.
And this in Basel! Can a man conceive it?

JUSTINA. I trow, such is his practice everywhere.

DR. C. In truth; yet here but thirteen years ago
He still was sitting at his master's feet,
And was Trithemius' scholar! Knew you not?

JUSTINA. Trithemius? The one who died last year?

DR. C. And in good season! And to this self-same
town

After unnumbered world-wide journeyings
Through Sweden, Prussia, and through Tartary,
Moving from one place to another—fleeing—
Mark you my meaning: he had cause to flee—
Returneth to the self-same town that taught him
The rudiments of our exalted art,
Which he hath now forgotten and gainsaid.

JUSTINA. Nay, tell me, then, who it is? Lived he
in Basel?

DR. C. You knew him well when he was simply
styled

Bombastus Theophrastus Hohenheim.

JUSTINA (*highly excited*). What say you? Theophrastus . . .

DR. C. Hohenheim.

JUSTINA. 'Tis he?

DR. C. Ay, he.

JUSTINA. Then the great Paracelsus,
Hear'st thou, Cecilia, is Hohenheim,
Of whom I told thee.

CECILIA. Nay, what aileth thee?

PARACELSUS

JUSTINA. Thou did'st not know him—wert as yet
a child ;
But now I know why Cyprian gives ear.

SCENE III

Enter ANSELM (A GALLANT), CECILIA, JUSTINA, COPUS.

ANSELM. My knocks you heard not, so I crave withal
Your pardon, that I entered unannounced.
Do I intrude ? Is not the Master here ?

JUSTINA. Not yet.

ANSELM (*with amiable affectation*). How fareth the
most beautiful
Of dames ? and how the loveliest of maidens ?
How the most erudite of learned men ?

CECILIA. And how the most unbearable of gallants ?

ANSELM (*looking all the time at JUSTINA*). He fareth
well—for soon he must depart
This fairest city, and much dear to him.

CECILIA. Are you quite sure ? You promised it
so oft !

ANSELM. My father calls me ; I must home again
Before I (*glances at JUSTINA*) reach the goal of my
desires ;

For now is Master Thomas discontented :
My organ play's amiss ; my composition
Is not succeeded ; and no single song
Have I completed, who began so much.

CECILIA. The cause is simple.

DR. C. You are yet so young,
And Music is no easy art withal.

PARACELSUS

ANSELM. To him who is not happy, naught comes easy.

CECILIA. And if a man through all the nights carouse,

And play at dice until the grey o' dawn,
He'll ne'er succeed in anything by day.

JUSTINA (*reproachfully*). Cecilia !

DR. C. Do you so ? Nay, 'tis not good.

ANSELM. Have you a remedy 'gainst grief of soul ?

DR. C. Dice are no remedy.

ANSELM. Nor even wine.

Yet both oblivion furnish—that is good.

DR. C. Your leech I am not—so must hold my peace.

CECILIA. But pray be mine ; for lo ! the livelong time

My head aches, and I stand here in distraction.

DR. C. Pardon, good Mistress, I'll prescribe forthwith

What shall assuage your pain within an hour.

CECILIA. Come to my chamber, Doctor.

DR. C. By your leave.

Exeunt COPUS and CECILIA.

SCENE IV

JUSTINA, ANSELM.

ANSELM. Justina.

JUSTINA. Stop !

ANSELM. To-day you do enjoin me vainly ;
That I the city needs must leave is true ;

PARACELSUS

True from to-day I ne'er shall see you more,
And I must needs declare——

JUSTINA.

I will not hear it.

ANSELM. Then I am silent ; but my dumbness
speaks.

JUSTINA. Each single word of yours is but an insult,
As are your looks offensive to my honour.

ANSELM. Those looks which upwards gaze unto a
goddess,

Those words which upwards mount into a prayer——?

JUSTINA. A truce, I say.

ANSELM.

You know me not, Justina ;

You know not what I wish—scarce what I am.

You deem me but a botcher—or a fool !

I am not that ! I'm more than you divine,

And that which palsies all my spirit's strength

Is that you know it not, and do disdain it.

A smile from those your lips could fashion me

An artist—ah ! a kiss a very master !

JUSTINA (*has recovered her self-possession, is cold
and sharp*). Fetch you from others what shall
learn you skill ;

I have no kisses and no smiles withal.

ANSELM. Then would I sing most wondrous songs
in praise

Of my well-lovèd mistress, that our names

Shall travel linked to far posterity.

JUSTINA. Blossoming youth hath never tempted me :
Shall fame, then—shall a shadow lure me ?

But, prithee, see—you only asked a smile . . .

I'll grant you more——

PARACELSUS

ANSELM. Oh, speak.
JUSTINA. I'll laugh aloud (*laughs*).
ANSELM. You drive me unto madness.
JUSTINA. Long's the way.
ANSELM. And unto death.
JUSTINA. We must all travel thither.
ANSELM (*throws himself down*). See! At your feet

I beg you, come this even
Into your garden—there for a last time
I fain will press my lips upon your hand.
No one will witness us . . . I'll climb within
Over the trellis there . . . the night is secret,
I'll wait within the arbour.

JUSTINA. You are mad!
Arise. My husband comes.

ANSELM. What then? An he
See me upon my knees, he'll laugh withal—
So blithely doth he walk about the world,
So certain of his wife, and drunken so
With the proud joy of his monopoly.
But I declare to you—such arrogance . . .

JUSTINA. Arise, for Heaven's sake! Do you not
hear——?

SCENE V

ANSELM, JUSTINA, CYPRIAN. *Later* PARACELSUS.

CYPRIAN (*smiling at the embarrassment of both*).

My worthy gallant, so you're here again?

ANSELM. I am . . . I merely wanted . . .

PARACELSUS

CYP. (*without noticing him further, to JUSTINA*).

My sweet child,

I bring to-day a guest right marvellous,
With whom I warrant you we shall divert us.

(JUSTINA *gives a slight start*.)

My worthy Paracelsus, enter in

(PARACELSUS *appears at the door*.)

A simple burgher's house—and yet methinks,
After your buffets of the midnight air,
It looketh not amiss.

PARACELSUS. I do not scorn
The hospitality of Heaven's roof.

CYP. (*pointing to ANSELM*). Anselm, a gallant noble
who in Basel

At organ-playing—organ-playing, hey?—

ANSELM. Ay, truly, I would learn to play the organ.

CYP. (*remembering*). To Master Thomas, verily . . .
his father

I furnished a most lordly suit of armour

When with a troop of horsemen here he passed.

(*Shaking his head*) Warrior the sire . . . the son is
a musician.

ANSELM. Just for a pastime.

CYP. Well. (*To PARACELSUS*) And now, my
worthy,

Be welcome to us; 'tis full time that you

Should spend in honourable company

An hour over a bowl of goodly wine.

PARA. Does your fair spouse still recognise myself?

PARACELSUS

JUSTINA. Surely I know you.

PARACELSUS *looks at her steadfastly.*

CYP.

Verily for his years

How weatherworn ! Now what say'st thou ?

The man o'er whom sweeps mystery and gloom,

The never-resting one, whom rumour wild

Ever foreruns like to a madden'd herald,

This sorcerer—is none but Hohenheim,

Whom as a pious student once we knew.

PARA. I am no sorcerer, my noble dame ;

I am a leech, but shrewder than the others.

CYP. What leeches are, my friend, that know we
well ;

They ply not such buffooneries as you.

Yet whatso'er you are, you do divert me,

And now that you have crossed my house's threshold,

Be you my guest—from whenceso'er you come.

And I'm rejoiced I judged you aye aright,

Why, years ago, what time you dwelt in Basl,

Busied yourself with alchemy at Trithem's,

And under certain windows nightly languished,

I ever knew no good would come o' you !

*Maid comes with wine ; when she has
served it, she goes away again. JUSTINA
busies herself a little in arranging the
table. PARACELSUS looks sharply at
ANSELM.*

PARA. You deem ?

CYP.

But this forsooth my censure is :

Let each man live what fashion makes him glad !

PARACELSUS

What would it boot, forsooth, by one's own hearth
Serving one's household and the common weal,
To ply one's handicraft an honest burgher,
Were there not others lured to far adventures—
Who fare as errant fellows on their way?
'And I am fain at times to see such varlets,
Who bring the flavour of their distant journeys.
Then, when they leave, why, one is triply glad
That one has wife and home and handicraft.

JUSTINA. Your guest still stands the while.

CYP. Nay, sit you down,
And you, my worthy gallant.

ANSELM. Pardon me.
I must depart, for this same night I journey.

CYP. What say you?

ANSELM. Yea, my father calls and urges,
And many duties have I e'er I leave.
I'll come at noon, to bid you my adieus.
(*As he leaves*) I could not bear that look another
moment.

SCENE VI

CYPRIAN, JUSTINA, PARACELSUS.

CYP. What ails the gallant?

JUSTINA (*embarrassed*). I know not.

CYP. (*smiling*). But I!

What boots it that he spake to thee of love?

JUSTINA. But nay.

CYP. That thou wert wrathful with him——

JUSTINA. Nay.

PARACELSUS

CYP. And didst despatch him homewards with
rough words?

JUSTINA. What a conceit!

CYP. (*laughing*). I hope thou didst no less.

JUSTINA. Well, then, I did so.

CYP. See how red she grows.

PARA. And bashful as though beauty were a sin.

JUSTINA (*almost in tears*). I do entreat thee . . .

CYP. (*to PARACELSUS*). See, ever the same.

PARA. (*meaningly*). I see 't.

CYP. (*jesting*). Ashamed of her mute potency
'That each man feels perforce who nigh her comes.
Thou too were wont to sing a song thereof.

JUSTINA (*entreating*). I beg thee.

PARA. Do you fear your memory?
One cannot better rid you of your fear
Than when one wakes the past to life again.

CYP. Whom fears she here withal? The past is
past.

She took me for her spouse, not you, and praises
Daily her God for that election.

Mine is this house, as it my father's was,
And all my forbears for three hundred years.
Waxes its weal by labour and by toil:

Come now—my friend, look at me, this same arm,
Which, as is known, to forge a goodly sword,
And, if needs be, to swing it too hath skill,
Is aptly fashioned to defend a woman.

'Tis that the woman asks, and by that virtue
I won her, by that virtue I can keep her.

Nothing have I to fear—not memory,

PARACELSUS

Nor any moonish passion : by the present
Encompassed and well trammelled is the woman.
My door stands open wide—I fear no man.

PARA. I would that word were true as it is proud.

CYP. I grant that wish unto you—'tis fulfilled.

SCENE VII

JUSTINA, CYPRIAN, PARACELSUS. *Enter CECILIA. As she sees PARACELSUS, she starts to go.*

CYP. Nay, stay ! This is Cecilia.

PARA. Your sister.

JUSTINA. She was a child when you did leave the city.

Cecilia, this is a wonder-doctor.

CECILIA. I've seen you, sir, before.

CYP. How were it, think you,

An you on her made trial of your art ?

CECILIA. How . . . what ?

CYP. Just bide a while with us. I wager

This man can heal you by his sorcery.

PARA. What say you ?—"sorcery" ?

CYP. What other word

Fits that which in the market-place I saw ?

JUSTINA. But I myself am fain to know at last

What you can accomplish.

CYP. Now she finds her speech.

Amazement took it—curiosity

Restores it. (*Condescendingly*) Of all jugglers that
have showed here,

He is it who most shrewdly hits the mark.

PARACELSUS

I have no special favour for such folk ;
The art of eating fire or juggling balls,
Goldmaking, quackery, and comedy
Suits not my case. Marry, you all are varlets.

PARA. Maybe; we are not councillors, for certain.

CYP. The jest is bold, yet let it be forgiven,
Since of good humour is my mood to-day,
And you accomplish more than others can.
One sees that you learnt something in the past,
And under all the swindling tricks you ply,
Something there flashes that might learning be.

PARA. (*scornfully*). You jest!

CYP. Hear, children, what he hath accomplished.

PARA. Prithee forbear. . . .

CYP. Just while I think thereof.
(*To JUSTINA and CECILIA*) You know the wife o' the smith.

CECILIA. Who is quite palsied?

CYP. She moves since this same morning arm and legs.

What all the others' labour ne'er could accomplish,
'This man in one brief minute did achieve.

CECILIA. Is 't possible?

CYP. And there are stranger things.
Know'st thou the threshing-master's little daughter?

JUSTINA. Who the past winter was struck sudden dumb?

CYP. Again she speaketh since he bid her speak.

JUSTINA. How is 't all possible?

PARACELSUS

CYP. By wizardry!
And I have asked myself, extreme amazed,
How you till now have 'scaped the death of fire.

PARA. Patience, my honoured master; time brings
counsel.

CYP. But that which most of all astounds me
Was that which you did practise on Medardus.
(*Explaining*) He made the lad into a slumber sink
By his eye's potency.

CECILIA. Just by your eyes?

CYP. Then said he unto him—we all could hear it—
You are come homeward from a distant journey,
Through foreign lands, where you have much
adventured.

Tell us the tale thereof.

JUSTINA. And he?

CYP. Did tell!

JUSTINA. Of men, of things that he had never seen?

CYP. And of adventures that he never had.

JUSTINA. And he believed therein?

PARA. Not longer than I wished.
I did again those dreams obliterate;
And what he told to us, he knows no more.

CYP. Only yourself can what you gave redeem.

PARA. For sure.

CYP. And haply had you freed him not,
From those dreams which yourself had fashioned him?

PARA. His life long would he swear that it was true.

*Stands up; suddenly, in an almost pathetic
tone :*

PARACELSUS

So much avail I! Who avails so much?
I can be destiny, if so I please.

CYP. Such stuff, good fellow, dupes the market-place.
Here, leave big words alone, and so you please:
Destiny comes from God, not sorcerers,
And what you work is madness—nowise truth.

PARA. More than the truth, which once was and
shall be,

Is madness, that which is . . . and rules the moment.
Did you avail the past years of your life,
Like written pages to unroll before you,
You scarcely would a single word interpret,
For Memory deceiveth like to Hope.
All's mystery . . . the minute passed
As each successive one, only the moment
Is ours—and lo! it flees away already.
Ponder but this—how every night compels us
To travel downwards to a foreign bourne,
Empties us of our potency and riches,
And how all life's abundance and its guerdons
Are of far lesser puissance than the dreams
That do our helpless, unwilling sleep encounter.

CYP. And many a nightmare hath rid o'er my brain;
Yet what avails it? One wakes up afresh,
There comes the sun, the wholesome noise o' day,
One laughs at dreams and goes about one's work.
Only who striveth after nothingness,
Like you, will let a dream bewilder him.
For men like us, who know their own desires,
Fate only is what shows itself by day,
And doth not vanish when we ope our eyes.

PARACELSUS

Ay, men like you were very lief, forsooth,
To rase the limits 'twixt the night and day,
And place us all in gloaming and in doubt.
May God be thanked much is there that is certain,
A man like me stands aye on solid ground,
Holds safely what he hath, is just and strong,
And be assured we fear your like no whit.

PARA. Nor is your fear required. But you did wish
That I should heal the worthy lady's sickness.

CYP. Quite right.

CEC. I'm well . . . besides, I have a doctor.

CYP. Then let Justina tell you, she confides
In her more than in me.

JUSTINA. The girl is peevish,
Nigh melancholy.

CEC. Nay.

JUSTINA. At times she sigheth,
Tears also have I seen within her eyes.

PARA. And no one knoweth why?

CEC. I never weep.

PARA. My noble mistress, I'll not question you,
The causes of your trouble will not probe,
I can away with every pain of yours,
Even without your naming me the reason.

CEC. Nay, nay.

CYP. Methinks it were well worth a trial.

PARA. A leech's questions oft are burdensome.
I'll spare you that, and make you hale and well.

CEC. Take all my pain away?

PARA. That will I do.

CEC. And then shall I be free?

PARACELSUS

PARA. From every pang.

CEC. And shall be blithe ?

PARA. And laugh the livelong day,
And understand not how you c'er were troubled.

CEC. Nay, I'll not laugh; nay, I will not be blithe.

CYP. Come, let a body look upon this fool.
Verily, laughter is God's finest blessing.

PARA. An it please not the lady, we will leave her
To find the course of silent happiness.

CEC. I wish not happiness.

CYP. Thou dost not wish—— ?

JUSTINA. What dost thou wish, then ?

CEC. To be left in peace.

PARA. It seems, my child, the pain oppressing you
Is steeped so deeply in a youthful joy
You would not lack it for the world. My counsel
Is, therefore—keep it truly in your heart.

CECILIA *runs away.*

SCENE VIII

JUSTINA, CYPRIAN, PARACELSUS.

CYP. And there you smile no whit discomfited.
It seems the magic wand has gone astray,
And in my house your art fails utterly.

PARA. I rather deemed that it had shown itself.

CYP. Perchance your sorcery in the market too
Was well rehearsed with the quickly healed,
As for Medardus, why, I warrant you,
Some paltry groschen bought his services.

PARA. Maybe.

PARACELSUS

CYP. A leech you style you ; you're a vagrant,
Like others, too, who now and then have luck.

PARA. And so not worth your hospitality.
Farewell.

CYP. Oh, no ! You'll not escape so lightly.

JUSTINA. You see, my husband jests—you still are
welcome.

CYP. Truly ! Each guest according to his kind.
Marry, if such a man one home invites,
Then let him show his mettle. Why, the fiddlers,
What folk I have here in mine house at times,
They play to me—or else they enter not.

PARA. 'Tis true. I have not yet earned me this
drink.

He steps suddenly in front of JUSTINA.

JUSTINA. What wish you ? . . .

She tries to lift herself, and cannot.

CYP. Well ?

JUSTINA. I will. . . .

PARA. You cannot rise.

CYP. Is 't true ?

PARA. Be not afraid, Justina. Heavy
Are now your eyelids ; they do close.
You try to open—cannot move. You are
So tired—tired—very tired. Slumber comes ;
Your senses swoon from you. You slumber now (*in
an almost incantatory tone*)
Quite deep—ay, deep—so deep—you sleep—you
dream.

She falls asleep. Long pause.

PARACELSUS

CYP. Excellent—ay. But now then make her dream.

PARA. That will I do. And will with gentle words
Make her traverse a very destiny.

I call it so—you call it but a dream :

Are you contented ?

CYP. I am all agog.

What pity that I did not call the neighbours.

Yet could I now——

PARA. Forbear ; they would disturb.

He bends over her.

CYP. May I not list to what you're doing ?

PARA. No.

I wish to see you marvel utterly.

Empty this goblet—patience have till then.

CYP. Ay, but no longer.

He drinks. PARACELSUS whispers something in JUSTINA'S ear. The position of the two is such that neither his nor her face is visible.

PARA. (*while CYPRIAN is still drinking*). I am finished.

CYP. (*putting down the goblet*). Well ?

PARA. Awake, Justina !—wake !

CYP. Justina !

PARA. (*firmly*). Wake !

JUSTINA stares at them both, and finally at CYPRIAN, gives a shriek, and runs away into her chamber, which she bolts on the inside.

PARACELSUS

CYP. (*is at first speechless*). Justina! (*To PARACELSUS*) Tell me what this signifies!
What have you done? . . . (*At the door*) Justina!
(*To PARACELSUS*) Doth she flee me?
What was it you did whisper in her ear?

PARA. Nay, calm yourself, for it is all in play!
She loves you, too, as much as ever.

CYP. Why
Fled she away? With such a glance!—Justina!

PARA. Tarry! She loves you, yet remorse now
racks——

CYP. Remorse?

PARA. Ay, so.

CYP. Explain you, an you please.

PARA. (*after a short pause*). A pretty stripling, who
just took his leave——

CYP. A pretty—who?

PARA. Anselm, methinks, his name——

CYP. What hath he, then?

PARA. What often gallants have.

CYP. She dreams, perchance, that she the gallant
loves?

An evil jest, forsooth.

PARA. What a conceit!

CYP. Well, then? Why did she flee me? Tell
it quickly!

PARA. Well, since she dreams — withal — what
troubles you?

CYP. Tell me; I wish to know it.

PARA. Well, she dreams
That she in Anselm's arms was rocked to rest.

PARACELSUS

CYP. That he——

PARA. The gallant did possess her e'en as you.

CYP. You gave that phantasy unto her.

PARA. Ay.

CYP. Then is your jest—make it undone—— (*At the door*) Justina! (*very anxious*).

PARA. A dream, good sir—what signifies it more? You know far better—you are living Life.

CYP. You could have other trials of your art Elected. See how you have tortured her. Speedily free her from the evil dream.

PARA. Why is it evil? It is sweet, perchance!

CYP. You are an insolent! Justina, listen! (*at the door*).

She's bolted now her chamber door.

PARA. Farewell.

CYP. You are not in your senses. Tarry here, You damnèd juggler, and conclude the jest! It doth suffice.

PARA. (*passionately*). Nay, it sufficeth not! Do you preserve Justina as she is, Guiltless, and verily guilty since she thinks it. Most chaste—and verily unchaste, for her senses Tingle with memory of wild delights. So I will leave your faithful wife to you.

CYP. You're crazy, and shall verily atone, That you on me, on Master Cyprian, Should dare so insolent a jest——

PARA. A jest?

When I see women of such quality,
Who should make happy men of mighty souls,

PARACELSUS

On such a lout, as you are, thrown away,
I feel anew embittered ! And that she,
'The woman once beloved by Paracelsus,
And whom they—after counsel—gave to you,
As though her life thus found its consummation——

CYP. Ay, unto me—not such a beggar as you.
In sooth ! such damsels are for men like us.

PARA. I know it, they're for you ; yet I know also,
One day with me fulfills a deeper yearning
Than fifty years with such an one as you.

CYP. Why boast you thus ? As happy as a woman
Can verily be, is she, these thirteen years
Spent by my side.

PARA. But are you certain of it ?
Since 'tis of men like you the natural gift,
Creatures of light approaching near you,
Into your sphere of dull and wretched smugness
Downwards to draw—think you, her home is here ?
She's nothing but your guest here—even as I.
Wasted I see too much of loveliness
On a gorged insolence that plumes itself.
It is an outrage on the law of nature,
And I strive what amendment I may compass.

CYP. (*furious*). If you believed that verily, damned
villain,

Why not compel her to go hence with you,
Since now you have her by your power enchanted ?

PARA. I am no thief. You judge me ill. I wish
From you to take her, yet to no one give her.
Pure shall she bide—for you alone besmirched.
Therefore . . . farewell.

PARACELSUS

JUSTINA. Oh, mock me not.

CYP. Thou dreamest. Thou art guiltless.

JUSTINA. Oh, would 'twere true ! I shudder at myself.

I see myself within his arms, and feel
His kisses burn on neck and lips and cheeks——

CYP. It is not true ! The wizard——

JUSTINA. Ay, thou owest
To him thou knowst the truth.

CYP. It is not true !

Yet once again I turn to you—I know
I have insulted you, you damnèd varlet,
And do so still. I in your power have faith—
You see I must have faith therein—but now
Let it suffice, prithee ! Finish this torture,
I'll let you go scot-free—nay, glorify
In every place your most especial art,
But work it quickly that my wife awaken.

JUSTINA. I am awake. How strangely thou dost
speak !

For heaven's sake ! if so it be my guilt
Obscure your senses—Paracelsus, help !

CYP. Dost now entreat him that he should——

JUSTINA. Forgive,

O Cyprian, forgive ! 'Tis verily passed—
I will be now to you the best o' wives !
A moment just of weakness hath it been ;
It ne'er shall come again, be thou assured.
Yet then there shone the moon so strangely bright,
The perfume from our lilac bushes wafted,
And I was all alone i' the summer-house.

PARACELSUS

PARA. But further.

CYP.

Silence.

JUSTINA.

Let all now be told.

'Tis for the best.

CYP.

I will not hear it.

PARA.

Let her—

Who knows what you shall feel!

CYPRIAN *is much overcome.*

JUSTINA.

I was alone

I' the summer-house—and thou wert in the tavern.

PARA. Wert never there?

CYP.

What man hath never been?

JUSTINA. And then he came—and took me by the hand—

And kissed me—and did speak such fiery words—

And then—and then—— O Cyprian, forgive!

CYP. Naught is there to forgive! Thou dream'st!

PARA. (*meaningly*). Who knows?

CYP. You know 't as I do!

PARA.

Is she not a woman?

Anselm a man? Is there no summer-house?

CYP. You—say——

PARA.

And if it verily were the truth

That I have simply shaken from her heart?

CYP. Why, you gave her the madness—yet you doubt?

PARA. I am a wizard merely—she's a woman!

CYP. You made me mad.

PARA.

Who will vouchsafe to us

To know if this her dream was not as well her life?

PARACELSUS

CYP. You think, Justina—— (*he hastens to her*).

PARA. (*to himself*). Doth the ironic flood
Of mine own magic close over mine head?
And the dividing limits e'en for me
Run into one another?

SCENE IX

CYPRIAN, JUSTINA, PARACELSUS. ANSELM *comes*. JUSTINA
gives a shriek. ANSELM *starts and looks at them*
all. CYPRIAN and PARACELSUS *observe him*. *Pause*.
He attempts to approach JUSTINA.

CYP. (*stopping in front of Anselm*). She hath confessed it——

ANSELM. What?

PARA. How he doth quail!

JUSTINA. Out of my sight!

ANSELM. In what have I offended?

CYP. She hath confessed. So mind, you tell no
lies!

ANSELM. Justina!

JUSTINA. Go! I will not see you more.
You took from me the peace of mine own soul,
Destroyed the gladness of our happy hearth,
Ruined too much for but a fleeting bliss!
How burns my soul with very shame, that I
Became the victim of your wanton youth
And mine unguarded senses. Woe for me,
That e'er I stepped into the summer-house.

ANSELM (*frightened*). For God's sake, hold your
peace! You talk haphazard!

PARACELSUS

CYP. (*draws his sword*). Confess !

JUSTINA.

Confess !

PARA.

Confess !

ANSELM. Naught have I to confess.

CYP. Dwells no more boldness in your craven heart
Than what sufficeth to approach a woman ?

ANSELM. Justina, this revenge lacks graciousness.

CYP. What, is't revenge that she is penitent ?
Caitiff !

ANSELM. Your sword I will encounter
At any assignation ; yet vouchsafe me
First to declare that my offence is slight.
No more I did than love your beauteous wife,
And dare to speak to her thereof.

CYP. But further !—further !

ANSELM.

That is all !

JUSTINA.

But nay !

He'll spare me . . . oh, will you not comprehend
That this is all in vain ?—for I myself
In deep remorse confessed to my spouse.

ANSELM (*suddenly to PARACELSUS*). This is your
machination, damnèd wizard !

CYP. Leave him in peace, I pray ! I owe him
much.

He brought the truth unto this house of lies ;
He is my friend, and I do crave his pardon.

PARA. Nay, softly ! As a medley of bright jewels,
Some false, some true, the last hour's fullness lies
Fully displayed ; but what to cast away
And what to keep as profit, have I knowledge
At present just as little—as yourselves.

PARACELSUS

And more for mine own self than for your favour
I will the skein unravel that I wove.

Justina ! Slumber !

ANSELM. I am all at sea !

PARA. (*firmly*). Sleep you !

CYP. What will you ?

PARA. Slumber deep, Justina,

Ay, deep—quite deep—to sleep—so is it good !

JUSTINA has sunk motionless on to the chair.

PARA. Justina ! Do you hear me ?

JUSTINA (*sleepily*). I do hear.

PARA. Then mark you well ! You have forgotten all
That passed from that same minute when I first
Sunk you in sleep, until the next when I
Shall bid you be awake—and this last hour
I hunt from out your mind, as though 't had never
been ;

And now——

CYP. And now ? What help is all o' this,
If she awakens and this hour shall vanish
From out her memory ? What know I, then,
If she in dreaming spoke perchance the truth !

PARA. There I avail. Justina, mark ! One thing
I do enjoin—be true when you awake,
So true as ne'er before—be you so true,
Nay, truer than your wont to your own self,
That like a clear flood i' the gleaming sun
Your soul shall shine transparent to its bottom,
Until the even of this pregnant day
Free you from this last speech of sorcery.

PARACELSUS

CYP. But why to even only?

PARA.

It sufficeth.

You shall rejoice you that the sun shall set,
Though she be best out of all womankind.

ANSELM. This riddle's solving vainly I would
compass.

PARA. Awake, Justina . . . be you true . . .
awake!

JUSTINA (*opens her eyes and speaks at once, as
though nothing had happened*). Now say—how
long will you yet stare at me?

In vain—your magic worketh not at all.

Nay! had your gaze still as much potency

As in the days when you were Hohenheim—

I mean, for me—but that is long since over.

Oh, gallant Anselm—how came you in, pray?

I heard you not! Bid you adieu to us?

ANSELM. You know . . . Justina—

JUSTINA.

It is good you leave,

And I shall first breathe truly when you're
home

In your sire's castle.

ANSELM.

You . . . do mean?—

JUSTINA.

'Tis time!

Had you one single night more tarried,

Then had we parted far less innocent;

Still feel I the last quiver of my youth,

Spring flattereth and beauty lures withal.

'Tis well, then, that you go as swift you can,

For oh! what would have been the finish of't?

A little bliss and aye much pain and sorrow.

PARACELSUS

All that is spared to me. As a true wife (*to CYPRIAN*),
I can still look thee in thine eyes,

An thou dost guard me, thou canst trust in me.

CYP. By God, that will I do!

JUSTINA.

A peaceful bliss,

Although not over-ardent, still's the best.

SCENE X

CYPRIAN, JUSTINA, PARACELSUS, ANSELM. *Enter CECILIA.*

ANSELM (*very glad when CECILIA comes*). My noble
damsel, that again I see you
Affords much pleasure. I do take my leave—
I take my leave for ever now of Basel.

CEC. (*smiling*). So 'tis in earnest?

JUSTINA.

Smilest thou?—'tis right.

A childish dream departs. My case thou seest.

CEC. What says she then withal?

JUSTINA.

Sweet child, thou wilt

Have soon forgot the pretty gentleman.

ANSELM. Cecilia . . . nay . . . I feel as——

PARA.

Listen well.

CEC. Justina . . . Brother . . . (*begging for help*).

CYP.

Hush! She is inspired.

JUSTINA. See (*looking at PARACELSUS*), yonder man

I held most verily dear,

Ah, long ago—O Cyprian, how long?

When you went hence those thirteen years ago

Without farewell or word of coming back

I thought I'd die perforce. Had you that night,

That very night in which you left the city,

PARACELSUS

Again returned—oh, I had everything
That you had craved for given joyfully,
Although I knew full well the coming morrow
Took you for ever from me! So I loved you!
Who knows how many windows in the city
Open each night for one who never comes?

CYP. What do I hear? Oh, may the sun sink
soon——

CEC. Justina——

JUSTINA. Theophrastus, think you still of it?
Yet see how all things somehow shape for good;
To-day I do thank God you left the city
That night, and that your courage failed you.
What then were I to-day? While unto you
The unbounded world with all its fame belonged,
Ruined I'd sit at home in shame and mockery—
Ay, Cyprian, so easy hadst thou lost me!
And not an inkling hadst—as is thy way,
Thinking that once I was betrothed to thee
Thou wast assured of my affection.
Marry! on many a night hadst thou but felt
How far from thee I was—truly! less proud
Hadst thou felt of the woman in thine arms.
Yet strong avails the present conquering
With little toil its greatest foe, the past—
And so thou wonnest me, my Cyprian,
And I am thine, and so would fain remain.

CYP. But now the far-off Past is here again.

JUSTINA. Aye . . . it is he—yet is 't not he! Nigh
seems

Twixt him and me a wider, deeper gulf

PARACELSUS

Than me from any other doth divide,
As one who would betoken—yet is not.
He stands by me—a shadow of my youth.
And even so, my sister, be assured,
With thee and Anselm shall it come to pass.
Thou wilt smile at the folly which to-day
Seemeth life's essence——

ANSELM (*affected*). Say not folly—no !
The fool was I—yet I dare not a word !
This hour appears to me full marvellous,
With pregnant truth it flashes and it gleams.
Who wrought it—I surmise ; what way he did it—
I have no power to fathom ; yet I know
That e'en in me a comprehension stirs,
And that I sorely erred, my wanton eye
To raise against an honourable dame.
Pray pardon of your grace my youthful pride,
My noble master, and stretch out your hand.
My erst distraction passeth by degrees,
Much comprehend I—and the clouds now vanish.

He looks at CECILIA.

SCENE XI

Previous characters, COPUS.

COPUS (*still at the door*). I greet you all. Knows
yet your noble circle
The last intelligence ?

CYP. Allow me first—(*introducing*)
Sir Doctor Copus, town physician here——

PARACELSUS

COPUS (*bowing*). Sir Theophrastus Hohenheim——

PARA.

I'm he.

COPUS. Then I may now convey the news myself,

I was announcing to this noble circle,
I come immediate from the City Council,
A resolution there was put and carried
To you, good sir, of highest import.

PARA. They drive me out?

COPUS. Oh, if 'twere that! Forgive me.

PARA. Decree 's pronounced against me of arrest?

COPUS. What dream you of?

PARA. (*smiling*). The stake is threatening?

COPUS. How badly judge you this good town of
Basel!

Hear, then: the Council will, to honour you,
Create a novel dignity, and chooses
You to be second town physician. I'm
The first. You marvel?

PARA. I do thank the Council.

COPUS. That means—you take the office?

PARA.

I'm unable.

COPUS. Oh, think not so. You can! Since I'm
the first,

So you, my friend, have good support in me.
In many a thing with pleasure I'll instruct you,
In ticklish cases give you of my counsel;
Masters are fain to see a modest scholar.

PARA. Forgive me, I'm not worthy such an
office.

You would not be content, I'm sore afraid.

PARACELSUS

I do not here abide ; I travel forth :
This very even do I leave this city.

COPUS. Is 't true ?

CYP. You go ?

PARA. I bid you all adieu.

CYP. Before you go, explain you, for you leave
Us all bewildered here. Was it in earnest ?
Was 't play ?

JUSTINA. How strangely question you !

COPUS. What means he ?

PARA. It was a play ! What were it otherwise ?
What is not play we ply upon this earth,
Howe'er so great and so profound it seems ?
For one will play with hordes of soldiers wild,
Another plays with superstition mad,
Some one perchance with suns and planets—
I play with human souls. And he alone
Will find a sense who seeks one.

Of others naught we know, naught of ourselves.
We ever play : who knows it, he is wise. (*Exit.*)

JUSTINA (*as though waking up*). What, then, hath
happened here ? I think I said

So much anent myself as I—ne'er wished to say.

COPUS. Nothing I fathom out of all I hear.
What hath occurred ? What did the juggler here ?

CYP. I know not if he wished benevolence,
Yet was it good, and therefore will we praise
him.

A whirlwind came, who for a moment hath
Torn open all the portals of our souls,
And we have looked within us for a while. . . .

PARACELSUS

'Tis over, and the portals close again—
Yet what I saw to-day, for future time,
Shall hold me safe from all excess of pride.
It was a play, yet I did find its sense,
And know that I shall keep the right road hence.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

